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#65 JUL 1998

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WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

We dragged this bunch of reprobates off the street to find out which games are hot at the moment

★ WORDS/PHOTOS Garth Sumpter • LOCATION Birmingham



STUART ATKINS
21, retail manager

What's on your hard drive?

"NHL '98 and Quake 2."

Are you a big sports fan?

"I do like the EA sports label, especially as with faster chips and 3D cards you can have outrageous quality. I have a Pentium 333 and a Voodoo 2 card, which is terrific. I have had a few compatibility problems, but there are loads of patches on the Internet so a problem isn't one for too long."



JO SALSANI
26, actress

What's on your hard drive?

"I don't have any games!"

What, no games at all?

"Well, I do have Spielberg's *Directors Cut*. I got it as a present from a friend when they realised that I'd got a PC. It gave me a chance to have a look at the technical side of film-making – like having to choose which clips and which camera angles to use. I'm glad I don't have to do that for a job though. I'll stick to the day job for now."



MARK ZIMMERMAN
28, oil/energy consultant

What's on your hard drive?

"Civ2, Sim City and Quake."

Like building things, do you?

"Well I guess I do, but perhaps it's because I'm half German that I love to be organised and in control. But then maybe the English half just gets the better of me when I sit down to *Quake* and just run around blowing anything and everything to smithereens!"



SIMON JACKSON
24, wine merchant

What's on your hard drive?

"Quake, Tomb Raider."

Tried Tomb Raider 2 yet?

"I've just sold my PlayStation, so I'm just getting back into PC stuff after a slight relapse, but I think that even after the last year *Tomb Raider* is still the best. *Tomb Raider 2* does little extra, really, apart from sorting out the camera and corners problem. Oh, *MDK* was pretty excellent though, and a welcome break with a couple of bottles of Thunderbird."



SAM LAMBERT
23, account manger

What's on your hard drive?

"Civilization, Galactica, Bow And Arrow."

What on earth is Bow And Arrow?

"It's probably not something that you'll want to tell people about, as it's a simple mouse-controlled archery game where you shoot balloons. But it's tops for whiling away your lunchtime, or for winding down before a wild night out with the lager-swilling 'geezer girls' from downstairs."



MICK TOLLEY
34, accountant

What's on your hard drive?

"Far too many Excel files!"

What's getting your pulse going at the moment?

"There are so many games around that are good. But *Castrol Honda Superbike* currently looks very good – especially with a 3D accelerator. You know that it's really strange, but the best thing about it is the sound. The in-game's exhaust note sound is spot-on. I just turn it on to go for a ride in my bedroom... Ahhhhhh!"



GARY SUMMERS
33, quality control manager

What's on your hard drive?

"Quake2, FIFA '98."

Do you like your footie, then?

"Well I do, but I don't like the commentaries. I find Andy Gray really grating! I do like the odd shoot 'em up too, although I wasn't that happy with *Hexen*. It's too long-winded. I only play games for a few hours at the weekend, so I really just want to wade in and blast. That's probably why *Duke Nukem* is still a firm favourite!"



ANDREAS KYRIACOU
11, nuclear physicist and schoolboy

What's on your hard drive?

"Tomb Raider."

What's the biggest attraction?

"Well it's got good graphics, good control and it's got Lara Croft. She's hot, man! She's at her hottest if you turn her round so that she's sideways on. But she's not just good to look at. She does all sorts of neat moves – jumping backwards, doing flips and some other great stunts. I just can't wait until I can get my hands on *TR2*."



CHRISTIANA KYRIACOU
16, schoolgirl and long-suffering sister of Andreas

What's on your hard drive?

"Tomb Raider, Theme Hospital."

Are you very into games?

"I'm so happy that there are such things as PCs so I can get a bit of peace at home from time to time. Andreas is a typical boy, he just wants to shoot at stuff. I like a bit of a challenge; I can lose myself in *Theme Hospital* for a few minutes or a few hours. I wonder if Andreas would be quieter if he caught Bloaty Head disease?"



NICK ASHLEY
24, TV buyer

What's on your hard drive?

"Williams Defender and Pac Man."

Why the old games?

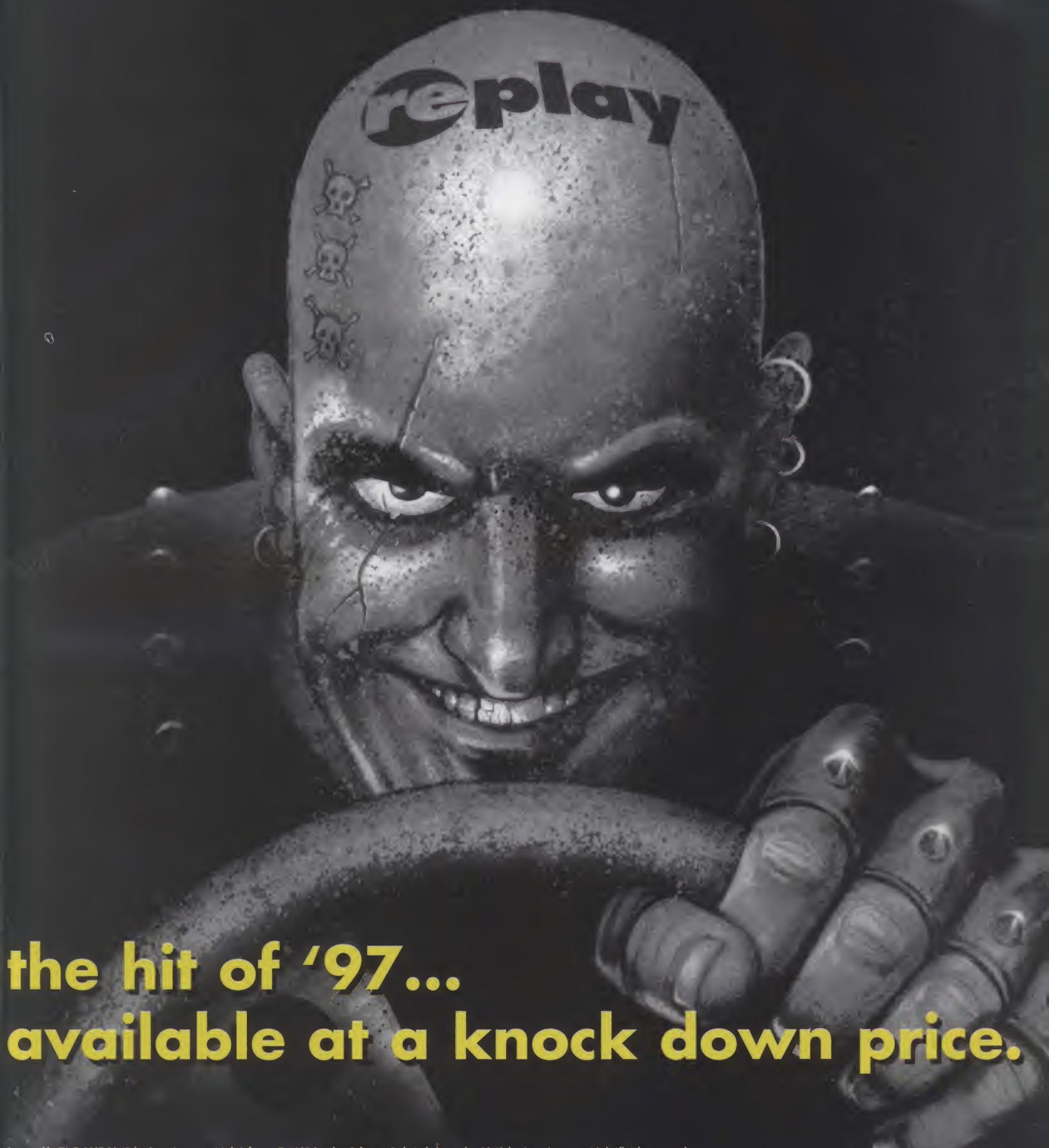
"Call me a nostalgic penny-pincher, but I'm now running an emulator on a 586 PC. I downloaded everything that I needed from the MAME homepage, and now I can play loads of classic old arcade games for nothing! I've now put my PlayStation to one side. So far I've only got two of the games to run, but I think I'm probably doing something wrong."



CARMAGEDDON

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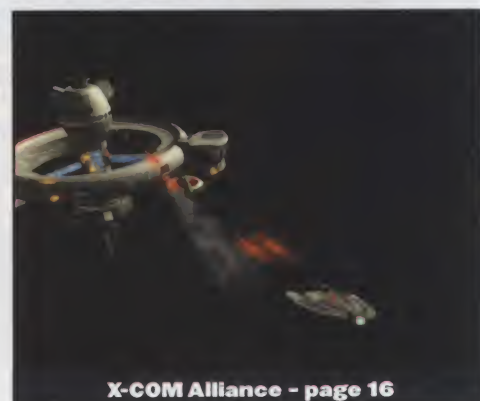
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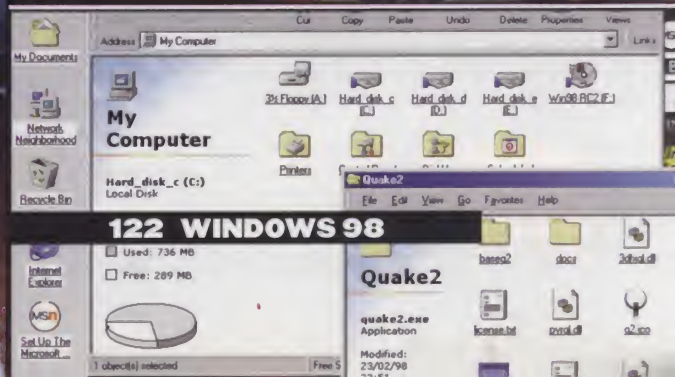
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WELCOME TO THE ALL-NEW PC ZONE

GET IN TOUCH

Let us know what you think of the new *PC Zone*. Write to:
PC Zone, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.
 Alternatively, e-mail us at mhigham@dennis.co.uk.
 We're waiting to hear from you.

We're now bigger, less expensive and better than ever. As you can probably tell from the cover, a lot of things have changed this issue, and we've pulled out all the stops to bring you the finest PC games magazine on the planet.

There's even more of the latest news, previews and reviews, more tips and cheats, plus heaps of new sections designed to help you get more out of your PC games. Most of these changes

have been made in direct response to your feedback. But we're not resting on our laurels. We want to hear what you think of the new *PC Zone*, and if you've got ideas on things we can do even better, send them this way.

Many of the new sections in *Zone* are designed to encourage your feedback into the mag. Whatever you've got to say, we want to hear it. Other sections in the mag are there to help you get more out of your games. Besides a bigger games help section and a new Q&A page where we solve your gaming problems, we've also got a page where Warren answers your technical queries (page 127), and Phil helps you get more out of your existing titles with patches and bug fixes on page 164.

Of course, the really big thing this

issue isn't any of that stuff. The really big thing is *Carmageddon II*. After spending a day on the Isle of Wight with the mad bastards who are Stainless Software, I can vouch that this is one game you won't want to miss when it (literally) hits the streets. Can *Carma II* provoke the same level of controversy as its predecessor did? Find out what happened when we asked Stainless if they intend to deliver another blood-soaked gore-fest to the masses (and wished we hadn't).

Now stop wasting your time here and start reading the issue. When you've finished, remember to write and let us know what you think.

All the best,
Jeremy Wells (Editor)

MEET THE ZONE CLAN

Every one of our reviewers is an expert in his field. We like to give every game that comes in for review the best chance, which is why we give it to a reviewer who's a fan of the genre



Jeremy Wells

What's on your hard drive? *CM 97/98, Unreal, World Cup 98, Spec Ops*
Best games ever: *Championship Manager 2, Quake II, Gran Turismo (PSX)*
Favourite genres: Sports, driving, *Quake* clones
Who's gonna win the World Cup? I'm putting money on Argentina, Holland and France



Chris Anderson

What's on your hard drive? *Forsaken, X-COM Interceptor and F-22 ADF*
Best games ever: *X-COM Apocalypse, Final Fantasy VII (PSX), Ultima VII and Midwinter*
Favourite genres: Strategy, adventure and RPGs
Who's gonna win the World Cup? England, of course



Paul Mallinson

What's on your hard drive? *Unreal, Warlords III: Dark Lords and Quake II*
Best games ever: *Resident Evil 2, Super Tennis (SNES) and Quake II*
Favourite genres: RPGs, shoot 'em ups and... anything, really
Who's gonna win the World Cup? Argentina



Richie Shoemaker

What's on your hard drive? *Blood, Total Annihilation and Quake II*
Best games ever: *Elite (BBC Micro), Laser Squad (Spectrum), Doom*
Favourite genres: Real Time Strategy and 3D shoot 'em ups
Who's gonna win the World Cup? England



David MacCandless

What's on your hard drive? *ChronoTrigger* on the SNES emulator, *FruityLoops* (www.fruityloops.com) and *Quake 2*
Best games ever: *Ultima Underworld, Doom* (first episode), *Resident Evil II*
Favourite genres: 3D shooters
Who's gonna win the World Cup? France



Charlie Brooker

What's on your hard drive? *Unreal, Quake II and Micro Machines V3*
Best games ever: *Quake II, Puzzle Bobble and Tekken 3 (PSX)*
Favourite genres: Action, strategy and point & click adventures
Who's gonna win the World Cup? I've no idea. I think football is for c***s



Paul Presley

What's on your hard drive? *Flight Unlimited II, Quake II and F-22 ADF*
Best games ever: *Minder (Spectrum), Ultima IV and The Secret Of Monkey Island*
Favourite genres: RPGs, adventures and flight sims - anything that's good
Who's gonna win the World Cup? Japan have got an outside chance, but I'd have to say Brazil



Patrick McCarthy

What's on your hard drive? *Championship Manager 2, Golf Pro, RAC Rally, Screamer Rally*
Best games ever: *Championship Manager 2, Goldeneye (N64), ISS 64 (N64)*
Favourite genres: Everything except turn-based combat games
Who's gonna win the World Cup? Heart says Nigeria, head says Brazil



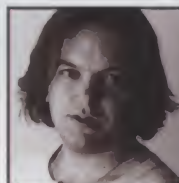
Phil Wand

What's on your hard drive? *GTA, Total Annihilation, F1GP2, Duke Nukem 3D* and hundreds of old Sinclair Spectrum games
Best games ever: *Total Annihilation, Doom v.1*
Favourite genres: Real Time Strategy, driving
Who's gonna win the World Cup? England, natch



Steve Hill

What's on your hard drive? Not much. It's not very big
Best games ever: *Sensible World Of Soccer, ISS 64 (N64) and Manic Miner (Spectrum)*
Favourite genres: Football, driving and 3D shoot 'em ups
Who's gonna win the World Cup? England



Warren Chrismas

What's on your hard drive? *Windows 98, World Cup 98 and Commandos*
Best games ever: *Tetris (Gameboy), CM2 and ISS 64 (N64)*
Favourite genres: Sports and driving
Who's gonna win the World Cup? England



Andrew Wright

What's on your hard drive? *M1 Tank Platoon 2, C&C: Red Alert - Aftermath, Age Of Empires and F-22 ADF*
Best games ever: *Dungeon Master, Civ II, Doom, Incubation and C&C*
Favourite genres: War games (by a neck), strategy and *Quake* clones
Who's gonna win the World Cup? England - with Alan Shearer finishing as top scorer

PCZONE

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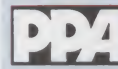
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ON THE BALL 2

THE STUFF

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ON THE BALL 2 takes football management gaming into a whole new era. In this long awaited sequel to the smash hit 'On the Ball', you can now play every aspect of management, no matter how unethical some of the methods may appear to be.

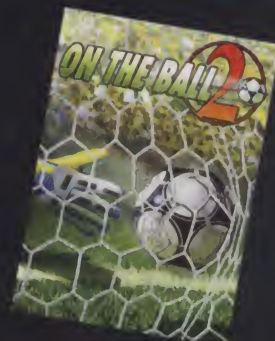
As manager, you will have to decide on how to invest your club's money wisely. If you don't have any money, you will need to carefully analyse the myriad of credit options on offer. Depending on how daring you feel, you may wish to dabble on the stock market and even buy shares in a competitive club. If you're the sort of manager that believes that crime actually

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Of course, there are the normal management activities such as Team and Player tactics, buying and selling National and International players, reviewing contracts, training players, maintaining stadium facilities and just about every other normal management function.

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MAILBOX



That old censorship thang rears its ugly head again; force feedback gets the thumbs up; and left-handers aren't getting the full monty out of some joysticks

★ ANSWERED BY Jeremy Wells

CONTACT INFO

If your letter is selected as 'Letter of the Month' we'll send you some promotional goodies, a game and maybe even some hardware!

WRITE TO Mailbox, PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

E-MAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk

CHAT FORUM If you've got something pressing to say, check out the 'lively' chat forum on our website. Point your browser at www.pczone.co.uk for further info.

➡ *Actua* (right) or *FIFA* (below)? Well, the former is the game of choice in the Zone office.



ACTUA SOCCER VS FIFA: RTWC

I finally succumbed to the hype and bought *FIFA Soccer: RTWC*. It was good – for about five minutes! The truth is it's far too easy. How *PC Zone* could recommend it is beyond me. I took it back and exchanged it for *Actua Soccer 2*, which I found challenging and quick, with commentary that had me rolling on the floor with laughter. Have you seen *Actua Soccer 3*? If so, when is it coming out?

Tommy Ettling, Cambridge

★ Until *World Cup 98* came in this month, *Actua Soccer 2* was the footie game of choice here at *Zone*, which is why we rated it higher than *FIFA: RTWC*.

However, I'm sure if you turn off some of the player aids in *FIFA*, you'll find it a lot more challenging – in the latest version (reviewed on page 100), you can make the game as difficult as you like by switching off the player

aids and adjusting the speed. *Actua Soccer 3* is due for release at the end of this year. It sports more detailed graphics, improved player artificial intelligence and comprehensive control options, and looks to be every bit as quick and accessible as the last version.

THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT

In response to issue 63's Letter of the Month, I write with disgust at the neglect of your younger readers. Probably half of your readers are under the age of 18. Your mag is usually excellent and well worth my hard-earned pocket money, but if I wanted to read a pile of ageist pigshit I would read the local parish magazine. Paul Louis is a hypocrite for implying that 14-year-olds are sad, spotty gits. He must have been at least 12 when he first started playing games.

Karl Liljenberg, Southport

★ The point Paul Louis was trying to make was that games aren't played solely by mindless adolescents who can't

LEFT-HANDERS

Does anyone know of a company that produces joysticks suitable for left-handers? I have a Gravis Pro joystick, but I can't use the throttle or the two programmable fire buttons located on the left side of the base. Please help me and others like me – it's not our fault we're so deformed.

Pete Haworth, Haslingdon

★ Sorry, but we don't know of any companies who produce sticks specifically for lefties. Can anyone recommend a stick that's suitable, or does anyone know whether it's possible to convert a stick? If so, let us know.

➡ Office left-hander Mark grapples with the Gravis Pro. Is there any hope for him and loony lefties like him?



“I think *Quake II* is one of the best-looking games I've ever seen, but I don't want to play it in jerk-o-vision!”

– J, WEMBLEY, LONDON

tell the difference between reality and what they see on-screen. The sooner the media realise that the people who play games should be treated with the same respect as, say, moviegoers, the better. And the average age of *PC Zone*'s readership is 29.

I WANT QUAKE II

I have a P166 MMX with 16Mb RAM and no 3D accelerator card. Should

I buy *Quake II*? I think *Quake II* is one of the best-looking games I've ever seen, but I don't want to play it in jerk-o-vision. Also, all my mates have PlayStations and say that it's a much better system than the PC. Should I give in and buy one?

J, Wembley, London

★ *Quake II* will run on your system, but you really need to splash out on another 16Mb of RAM and a 3Dfx card if you want to play it as it was

intended. Why not borrow your mate's PSX with his top five games and lend him your PC for a week and then see who's happiest?

MORE PARK LIFE

As I am such a big fan of the incredible *Theme Park*, I was wondering whether there were plans for a *Theme Park 2*, or something similar, in the not-so-distant future. Could you guys possibly get some info out of Bullfrog?

David Byrne, Wimbourne, Dorset

★ Last time we visited the 'Mana' house, Bullfrog let slip that they

LETTER OF THE MONTH

ADVENTURES ARE ACE

While my mates were endangering the lives of animals in *Tomb Raider 2*, I was replaying *King's Quest 4*. When they were busy killing in *Quake II*, I was laughing my head off at *Monkey Island 1* and *2*. *Leisure Suit Larry* may have a frustrating lack of vocabulary, terrible graphics and an annoying habit of killing you for standing on the pavement, but the sense of achievement after completing a puzzle is enormous. The sense of achievement I felt after completing *Quake II* and *Tomb Raider 2* was nothing compared to what I felt after working my way through *Sam & Max*. When are people going to realise that people want good graphics in adventure games, too?

Simon Engledew, Basingstoke

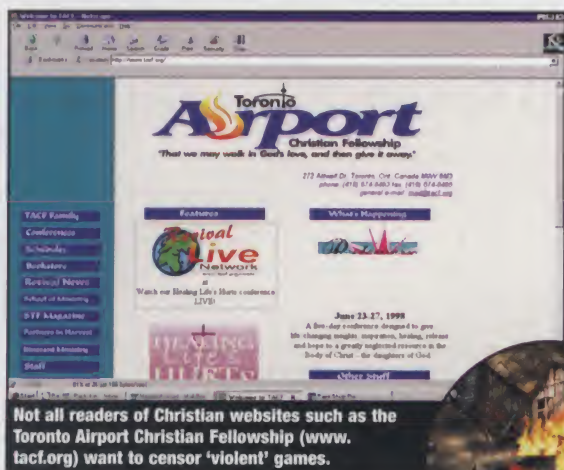
★ Adventure games don't seem to have embraced the new 3D technology in the same way as first-person shoot 'em ups. However, LucasArts once again seem to be pushing the envelope with their lush-looking *Grim Fandango* (previewed last issue), which is due for release this autumn. If you believe the rumours, they're also believed to be working on a new 3D Indiana Jones adventure. Let's see what they can do to bring the genre up to date.

The "lush" *Grim Fandango*: pushing the envelope.



NOT SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIAL

In a recent Comment, Paul Presley asked why some Christians criticise computer games. Could playing games really be bad for you? We give you both sides of the story



SAVE YOURSELF

I write in response to Paul Presley's Comment in issue 62. I am a 27-year-old Christian lad (I mean real Christian, not just Sunday morning social clubber) who happens to play and enjoy computer games. I raise two issues.

1. Censorship is a touchy subject, but anything beyond a rating system or a note on the box describing the content of a game is frankly insulting. If you don't like a game or its content, don't buy it. After all, these things are only games. You play them, have some fun, walk away and life goes on. You are

more likely to do some damage driving a car after a frenzied one-hour go-kart session than after playing *GTA*. Shall we ban that as well?

I find it hard to believe that the majority of people are unable to tell fantasy from fact, the virtual from the real. PC graphics may be good, but they're not that good. I also agree with Paul's call for more interesting content, which can do nothing but good.

2. Paul has drawn first blood by having a dig at Christianity, so it is only fair that I retort. Christianity is not about

burning books and records and condemning computer games as unsuitable for the masses. The real focus of Christianity is Jesus, who is alive and well and very active in areas of the Church and the world today. If you check out some of the rocking Christian websites, you will see examples of this. Try

www.tacf.org
(Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship),
www.irm.com
or www.frangipane.org,

to name just three.

If you speak to Christians who really know Jesus, you will find that we try very hard not to misinterpret and we are not self-contradictory. We certainly will not try to

“Someone has to do something to save your sorry butts from cooking in Hell”

— SEAN MORRIS, E-MAIL

force anything on to anybody, but we will be uncompromising in the way we live our lives, and when asked our opinion on an issue will be unapologetic in our

response. If at times we seem a little over-eager, it is only because time is short and someone has to do something to save your sorry butts from cooking in Hell.

Sean Morris, e-mail

HYPOCRITICAL?

Why is it that the people who complain about violence on TV and in computer games are generally Christians who follow a religion based on violent images? Why is it acceptable to take small children into a church and show them the image of a semi-naked Jew nailed to a wooden cross, with a crown of thorns embedded in his head, blood pouring down his face, and yet if the same imagery was used in a computer game it would be condemned as obscene filth?

I had a religious upbringing, and throughout my childhood I can recall pictorial renditions of such classics as the decapitation of John the Baptist, the crucifixion



of Jesus, the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, the public execution of Saint Catherine, and many, many more.

The Bible should have an 18 certificate embossed on its front cover. Christians seem to be incapable of realising that they are the worst advertisement for their own arguments against violence. They should listen less to the quasi-fascist ramblings of tabloid journalism and pathetic, facile lay-preaching, and concentrate on actually reading the Bible for a change, particularly Matthew 7:1 – “Judge not others, that you be not judged.” Or perhaps John 8:7 – “If anyone of you is without sin, let him cast the first stone.”

We are better and more unique creatures than to have to plough through this shit day after day. Let's move on to real issues, can we?

Patrick Mount, Wrexham

were working on two new games in the Designer Series, but wouldn't say exactly what they were. We proffered some obvious suggestions, namely *Theme Prison*, *Theme Old People's Home* and *Theme Hotel*, but they just smirked. However, they did let slip that there are plans for a new 3D *Theme Park* game. In the meantime, check out the very good *Theme Hospital* (PCZ #49, 91%).

MORE FORCE FEEDBACK

I recently bought a Microsoft SideWinder Force Feedback Pro joystick and I think it's

great. I didn't really like *MDK* until I played it with my new joystick, and now I think it's absolutely amazing. The thing is, not many other games seem to support this new technology. Do you know of any patches that will make games like *Quake II*, *Jedi Knight* and *Carmageddon* compatible? Why doesn't such a great innovation receive more support?

Stijn Cogge,
Aalter, Belgium

★ It's a pretty safe bet that Microsoft will do their utmost to convince game developers on pain of death to include Force support in future releases, and that come the end of the year just about every game will have built-in support. In the meantime, pester developers for patches and try the awesome *Incoming*.

SITH TOO EASY

On the back page of issue 63 of *PC Zone*, someone mentioned that *Mysteries*

Of The Sith was too hard. That man needs help, fast. I completed it in two weeks. Okay, it was tough, but not that tough. It's still one of the best games I've ever played though – better than *Quake II*.

James Storey, Mexborough,
South Yorks

★ Two weeks isn't exactly double-quick time, is it? At first, some of the *Zone* crew found it pretty heavy going in places. How long did it take the rest of you?

PATCHES, I'M DEPENDING ON YOU, SON

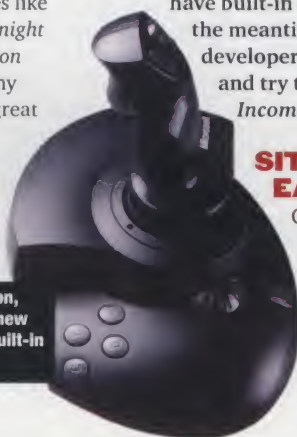
Last year I purchased *International Rally Championship*, but the game wouldn't run on my machine.

I sent the game back to Europress with a letter explaining my PC set-up and outlining the problems I was having. After weeks of trying to get the game working, I eventually gave up.

I've just purchased the latest edition of your mag and found a patch for *IRC*, and to my surprise, after installing the patch the game now works. While I am disappointed with Europress that the game wouldn't run in the first place, and that they were unable to find a solution to my problem, I am very grateful to your magazine for enabling me to play this very enjoyable game.

Stephen Foster, Charlton

★ Don't mention it.



Use the force: soon, just about every new game will have built-in support.

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WORLD FIRST



For the first time in the *X-COM* series, *Alliance* gives you the chance to take on the aliens face to face. Let's see how tough they (and you) really are.

X-COM Alliance to be

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER MicroProse

PUBLISHER MicroProse

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE January '99

IN SUMMARY

X-COM Alliance combines strategy and action in this type of game for the first time. Given the countless clones out there, we applaud MicroProse for breaking new ground in the genre.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU

We're counting the days to the release of a game that uses the *Unreal* engine and is set in the *X-COM* universe. *X-COM Alliance*, come on down.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

From what we've heard about *X-COM Alliance* so far, we can't see any. We're looking forward to the late nights and lack of sunlight!

MicroProse are out to prove that their *X-COM* titles have the most flexible game design around. *X-COM Alliance*, which combines deep strategy and 3D shoot 'em up action courtesy of the *Unreal* engine, could be the game to prove them right

★ **REPORT** Chris Anderson

With every publisher and his mum releasing a 3D shoot 'em up based on some revolutionary engine or other, we are in danger of becoming swamped by games that task us with: a) shooting things, and b) shooting some more things. With *X-COM Alliance*, the fifth game in the *X-COM* series, MicroProse are to be praised for attempting to bring an

element of originality to a genre plagued with clones. *X-COM Alliance* features the management and research elements that have made the series such a success to date, and first-person shoot 'em up action using the incredible *Unreal* engine. To say this project is ambitious is something of an understatement, given that many development houses can happily spend two years

working on just one of these two concepts and still manage to get it wrong.

The designers of *Alliance* have decided to take the series back in time to the ruins of the Cydonia base which formed the backdrop for the first *X-COM* game – *UFO: Enemy Unknown* (PCZ #15, 93%), as it was known in the UK. As the game begins, *X-COM* ships are in orbit around Mars when an abandoned dimension gate throws them 60 light years from Earth, into the middle of a war



Alliance boasts superb lighting effects.



The cameras at the top of the screen show you what your team-mates are up to.



The outside locations look even better than those in Unreal.



Some of the aliens, like these Insectoids, will be familiar to fans of the series.



Check out your weapons and armour on this screen.

powered by Unreal

between the aliens which inhabited the first game and a new race called the Ascadians. This is the first time in the *X-COM* series that you ever have an ally, because the Ascadians will join your forces and aid you in your attempts to foil the alien threat.

This is also the first game in the series to place the emphasis firmly on action. The first four games split the resource management and combat sections more or less down the middle, but MicroProse intend to pitch *Alliance* at a wider audience by trimming down the strategy side of things. This does not mean that long-standing *X-COM* veterans will be deprived of the resource management and research side of the game, just that it won't be as prominent. As

Adrian Turner, Product Manager for *X-COM Alliance*, explains: "This is not a *Quake* clone [glad to hear it - Ed]. You'll still have to get to grips with the research and management side of the

"This is not a *Quake* clone. You'll still have to get to grips with the research and management side of the game to succeed"

— ADRIAN TURNER, PRODUCT MANAGER FOR *X-COM ALLIANCE*

game to succeed."

Cynics could opine that MicroProse are tacking various combat models on to the *X-COM*

management and research engine and claiming they've come up with a new *X-COM* game. Nothing could be further from the truth, says Adrian. "We are not trying to fool anyone. The *X-COM* branding may be strong, but people will judge new *X-COM* games on their own merits. The new *X-COM* games will run parallel with one another, and gamers can decide which games to buy depending on which genres they like."

Whatever the case, these screenshots have caused quite a stir in the *PC Zone* office, and we can't wait get our hands on some playable code. When we rerevisit this game we'll bring you a full report. **PCZ**

The latest *X-COM* game, *X-COM Interceptor*, is reviewed on page 84.





Multiple views make *Drakan* as much of a joy to watch as it is to play. Although sitting in front of your monitor admiring the scenery is unlikely to further your progress in the game.

Drakan set to resh

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Surreal Software

PUBLISHER Psygnosis

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE January '99

IN SUMMARY

Drakan is a visually stunning action game with five unique worlds and two forms of combat (one is the norm for this kind of game). The aerial sections should provide welcome relief from the vast ground-based exploratory sections.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU

Action fans will surely tire of the relentless stream of *Tomb Raider* clones by the time this game comes out. *Drakan* looks set to lend more depth and variety to what may be an overcrowded genre by Christmas.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

The open-ended nature of the gameplay may reveal too much too soon. A more structured approach may be needed to ensure lasting appeal.

Psygnosis have a reputation for bringing console-style games to the PC, but that could all change when this stunning action RPG is released next year

★ **REPORT** Chris Anderson

Just a cursory glance at the screenshots on these pages will be reason enough for most people to write off *Drakan* as yet another *Tomb Raider* clone complete with obligatory big-breasted female. Psygnosis are understandably keen to dismiss such comparisons from the outset, and point to *Drakan*'s RPG-style exploratory elements as ample proof of the game's unique identity. The central characters are Rynn, the aforementioned bra-busting madame, and Arokh, a

firebreathing dragon which Rynn uses to traverse the game's five enormous environments.

The use of two different main characters has given *Drakan*'s developers the opportunity to implement two vastly different forms of combat: Rynn has over 50 different weapons at her disposal, such as swords, spears, crossbows and maces; Arokh uses fireballs, lava and ice to dispose of any undesirables who get in the duo's way.

This combination of ground-based exploration and lengthy flying sequences has never been seen on PC

before, although Sega's recently released *Panzer Dragoon Saga* on the Saturn echoes many of the gameplay elements inherent in Psygnosis' title. Having played *Panzer*, we can confidently say that this combination works admirably, and if anything *Drakan* will surpass Sega's accomplished title in almost every way if the demo we saw is any indication of what we can expect from the finished game.

Psygnosis promise a rich and engrossing plot for *Drakan* which will hopefully provide a suitable incentive for you to make your way through the huge and complex environments.



Arokh pleases the crowd with a particularly interesting fireball.



Bird with massive weapons adopts highly original Lara pose.



Use Arokh to scout nearby terrain.



A bloke. Impaled. On a spike. We won't be seeing this game in Germany then.



Conversational cut-scenes kick in as Rynn approaches strangers.

ape the RPG genre

Chief among the many adversaries you'll come across in *Drakan* is Kulrik, an evil sorcerer who has put the world under a spell of darkness. Rynn and Arokh must battle Kulrik's evil minions and finally the evil sorcerer himself in an attempt to right the wrongs foisted on earth's unsuspecting populace. The story of Rynn's epic battle against Kulrik will unfold as you get further into the game, and the developers are sensibly using their impressive game engine to provide the cut-scenes, so transition from in-game action to storytelling sequences will be seamless.

Surreal Software (the Californian development team working on *Drakan* for Psygnosis) have yet to decide on an exact mission structure, but 14 different levels are promised,

each with several mission goals, and the whole thing will span five enormous worlds. Curiously, all the worlds will be fully accessible from the start of the game, giving you an unprecedented level of freedom to

“The most striking element of *Drakan* at this early stage in its development is the level of detail”

explore the *Drakan* universe to your heart's content. This is a rather unique approach, as most developers choose to restrict you to a certain extent in order to maintain a level of surprise when you enter new areas.

Perhaps the most striking element of *Drakan* at this early stage in its development is the level of detail in both the characters and the game environment. To say this is one of the best-looking action games we've ever seen would be no overstatement. As ever, you can rely on *PC Zone* to bring you more information on this highly promising title as soon as we get it. **PCZ**

Ⓢ An early sketch of Arokh, who is now highly detailed, of course.



MAKING WAVES

★ REPORT Paul Mallinson, News Ed.

Has the PC gaming scene ever been busier than it is right now? That was the simple question I asked myself on the way into work this morning. Despite the usual talk and arguments about 'impending summer lulls' and 'nothing coming out', there is, at the moment, more activity in the games industry than there ever has been. Not only are there quite literally hundreds of PC games currently in development around the globe, but there are also plenty of good, new games coming out over the summer months. New game releases have not dried up as expected – one look at the new Hotline section on page 34 will prove that – and, regardless of the recent warm weather, there have been enough top games available to keep us locked away indoors (*Unreal* and *Forsaken* being prime examples).

The future, however, is our main concern here, and the recently refurbished Bulletin has been put together with this in mind. Featuring more than just game announcements and press release re-writes, our team of top reporters has scoured every major gaming avenue to collect the information for the following 21 pages. Regular readers may notice a number of new additions to the service, too. Wedged between these new features are a number of other tidbits and oublettes that we hope will keep you informed and entertained, and impressed enough to tell all your PC games-playing mates that there really is no better alternative when it comes to PC gaming news. In fact, we'd be disappointed if you didn't.

PLAYSTATION ZONE

Hot games about to hit the PC

24

CITIES

This month: Birmingham comes under the spotlight

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TECH HEAD

Sega's new console and how it could reshape the face of PC gaming forever

30



Dark Lords rise

Warlords III: Darklords Rising is set to be the next title in the long-running series. And it'll blow you away!

★ REPORT Paul Mallinson



Returning to the fabled world of Etheria will be a welcome tonic for many fantasy strategy fans come August. Even though *Warlords III*, still, remains capable of holding its own in an overcrowded marketplace, Brøderbund's forthcoming *Darklords Rising* promises massive improvements over the original release – enough, in fact, to tempt even more people to the legendary cause of light against darkness.

The Dark Horsemen of Death – Lords Bane and Sartek – return once more to wreak havoc through the continent of

Selentine over four brand-new campaigns and 12 individual one-off scenarios. As well as five new hero types, 30 new units (now fully, and properly, animated), ten new spells and ten new special character abilities, there will be major enhancements on the multi-player front – including seven new types of game (from 'capture the flag' to 'north versus south').

"After talking to *Warlords III: Reign Of Heroes* fans, we wanted to do much more than an add-on pack with the next *Warlords* game," SSG producer Gregor Whitley told us. "In addition to having a great engine, we redesigned *Warlords III* to support new multi-player games, greatly enhanced AI, and designed game-specific AI for each of the new game types. We're also including a much-requested game and map editor."

This much-anticipated game editor, we are informed, will not only allow construction of maps, but also of individual units and of campaign

Hardware-only 3D engine here

At the recent E3 Expo show in Atlanta, big boy publishing house Activision unveiled *Dark Side*, an in-house proprietary 3D engine that has taken their software engineers over a year to design and code. This new, 3D hardware-only polygon-shifter features open-ended architecture that allows it to take full advantage of new 3D technologies – ensuring its constant evolution in parallel with PC graphics hardware as it becomes available.

Featuring 'plug-in socket' technology (A fancy term for upgrade patching? – Ed) and supporting Direct3D and 3D sound, in addition to optimising the game for new upcoming processors such as Intel's Deschutes and Katmai, *Dark Side* will also support the special programming libraries for current 3D chipsets such as 3Dfx's Glide, PowerVR's SGL and Rendition's RRedline.

In light of Activision's recent *Quake III* signing, it looks like they are on course to sew up a large proportion of the 3D shoot 'em up market. We at PC Zone hope they can apply this new engine to other genres as well, like adventures or RPGs. But then we're sad.



From what we can see here, *Dark Side* looks nearer *Mysteries Of The Sith* than *Quake II*.

**THE PC
ZONE
CHARTS**
Win the top
20 games

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ChartTrack

**HOT
LINE**

Check
out
what's coming up

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HOTSHOTS
Don't miss the
latest shots
from Sierra's
Babylon 5

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e again

As well as new campaigns and scenarios, *Warlords III: Darklords Rising* will feature a fully enabled map editor so you can create your own map, units and settings – you can even import your own graphics.



scenarios. In effect, this will enable *Warlords III* fans to create their very own turn-based/real-time strategy game (*It can be either – Ed*), which includes changing user-defined tile sets and graphics. A graphics editor will not be provided, but files can be imported from most available graphics packages.

Best of all, potential converts will not be required to buy the original *Warlords*

III to play *Darklords Rising* – it will be available fully self-contained for the meagre sum of £34.99 – and existing *Warlords III* owners will also be entitled to a rebate if they buy the updated version. *PC Zone* will be returning from the E3 show in Atlanta (see page 33) with more details and a fully playable demo. Rest assured you'll be the first to hear about it when we do.

Blizzard can WarCraft

★ REPORT Phil Wand

In a surprise announcement, Blizzard Entertainment (the company behind top-selling titles such as *StarCraft* and *Diablo*) have stopped production on their forthcoming adventure title *Warcraft Adventures: Lord Of The Clans*.

Hidden under an innocent-looking link on Blizzard's website that merely reads: 'An announcement was made today regarding *WarCraft Adventures: Lord Of The Clans*', the company issued the following statement: "Following an intensive review of the game, the company determined that given the game's current status and the rapidly changing technology of the industry, it would not be possible to complete development of the game within a reasonable time frame." It then went on to say: "While this has been an extremely difficult decision, we firmly believe that we cannot release a title that does not meet the exceptionally high standards that both we and our customers expect from the Blizzard label."

Reaction from the gaming world was instantaneous, with participants on the comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.adventure newsgroups venturing everything from disappointment to speculation about Blizzard's attitude towards supporting a generally underperforming genre sales-wise.

In what was to be Blizzard's first entry into the point-and-click adventure genre, *WA: LOTC* cleverly used characters, locations and storylines taken from their top-selling strategy title *WarCraft II*. Much of the game had already been written, with most of the artwork having been developed by a leading Russian animation company. Now it will not see the light of day.



Invasion of the Registry Snatchers

Blizzard has been hit with a privacy suit following allegations that they pulled sensitive Windows registry information from *StarCraft* users without their permission

★ REPORT Phil Wand

Californian attorney Donald P Driscoll is not asking for damages, but instead wants the software developers to refund customers and to supply an amended version of the game that is not able to sniff out personal details. The request is a simple one, but Driscoll has hinted at further action. "A class action suit is not inconceivable, and there has certainly been some interest in filing one," he said.

StarCraft players in this country can only watch the fireworks, as UK data protection laws are of no help – both Blizzard and Battle.net are based in the US, and the Americans have a notoriously lax system anyway.

According to a Blizzard spokesperson, their software is able to extract information and forward it to their helpdesk whenever a user attempts and fails to connect to Battle.net, the company's online gaming service. "Shortly after *StarCraft* shipped, we began receiving complaints from users who were having some trouble connecting to Battle.net," she said. "To help solve the problem, we started to gather names and e-mail addresses from people who couldn't log on to the service."

Although Blizzard went on to explain that the data was only collected over a single seven-day period, and that they would not act without consent again, Driscoll doubts this. "Why would Blizzard collect information for a week, stop, and then start deleting it?"

The news comes not long after *Subspace* publishers Virgin admitted to keeping a database of users suspected of hacking their software. Rob Keir, the game's developer, said: "*Subspace* is able to detect if it's been cracked or not. So far we've gathered a nice list of offenders." What they plan to do next is anyone's guess.

Blizzard entertainment: snooping with *StarCraft*?



Shit happens

There are times in an editor's life when you pick up your latest masterpiece, read the first paragraph, and give yourself a mental pat on the back. On other, rare occasions you want to take a sharp object to the same part of your anatomy. If you read the introduction on page two of the supplement which came with limited editions of this month's *PC Zone*, you'll see what I mean. Sincere apologies to MicroProse (and Microsoft) for our inability to spot a typo at 100 yards.



More moody lighting, this time with coloured reflections in the water. What sort of PC will this take to run smoothly then?



Red sky at night, Grobbos' delight. Until you turn up armed to the teeth – with BFGs and rockets, that is.

Quake II packs more

Time to clear some space on your hard drive – it's *Quake II* mission pack time again

★ **REPORT** David McCandless

Hot on the heels of the release this month of *Quake II* mission pack *The Reckoning* (18 new levels, three new weapons, two new monsters), those two regular bedfellows id Software and Activision have announced yet more reasons to clear some space in your Q2 directory. A second bundle of new bits called *Ground Zero* (15 new levels, new weapons, new monsters – details are still a little sketchy) is due out in September for those ever-so-happy owners of *Quake II*.

The new pack comes from developers Rogue Entertainment, who were previously responsible for *Quake I* mission pack *Dissolution Of Eternity* – the lesser of the two packs, in PC Zone's

opinion. The Rogue add-on did distinguish itself, however, by being quite 'thinky' and 'planny' over *Quake*'s more 'shooty' and 'killy' outlook. So you can expect some labyrinthine levels, cunning traps and large interactive strategic bits to interact and be strategic with.

The plot concerns the evil alien race in *Quake II*, The Strogg, and their new weapon, the Gravity Well, which we anticipate will be involved in much sucking-in of passing players. Rogue are promising five new hubs, a bunch of new power-ups and a "slew" of murderous and explosive weaponry.

★ You can find more info at www.activision.com

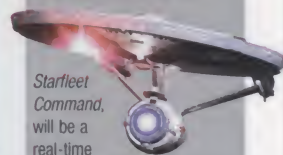


THE GOLDEN HELLO

Activision has signed up the rights to produce the prestigious Jack Nicklaus golf. In the hands of Accolade since 1988, Activision has taken over, trusting the sixth title in the series to developers Hypnos Entertainment, and producer Mike Franco, the man behind the last two Jack Nicklaus games. Catch our golf roundup on page 154.

STAR TREK STRATEGY

A sequel to Interplay's *Star Trek: Starfleet Academy* has been announced. Called



Starfleet Command, will be a real-time

strategy that includes footage from the original TV series and the first few movies. Set after the graduation of the cadets in the first game, it will feature a random campaign generator called Dynaverse and is set for a Christmas release.



This particular stage of *Ultim@te Race Rally* takes place on Skegness seafront, with palm trees flown in specially.

Ultim@te Race rallies round

Multi-player support makes its way into *Ultim@te Race*

Kalisto are set to continue the excellent *U-Race* series (as the people 'in the know' like to call it) with the autumn release of *Ultim@te Race Rally*. Intended for a bundle release with the new VideoLogic PowerVR card, *Ultim@te Race Rally* enables budding racers to tear-arse around quiet country lanes (in Scandinavia, Greece, Alps and the desert), instead of the usual cantilevered concrete labyrinths associated with many of today's race games. Kallisto promise an improved 3D engine, and 15-player network/Internet multi-player support. We at PC Zone will be punching the air in delight if that means more deathmatch levels. Cos we love 'em.



Come in number 51, your time is up. At least it will be when all those other drivers get their hands on you.

BETACALL

Beta testing is the last stage in game development, where you get to sit behind the wheel of a new game and take it out on a test drive – for free. Here are the sites worth checking out

★ *Flying Circus* from SimGuild is an on-line World War I flight sim currently in open beta.
Web: www.simguild.com/download
E-mail: circus@simguild.com

★ *Extreme Warfare* is an on-line 3D action game with commando-style missions and up to 32 players.
Web: www.extremewarfare.com/beta.html
E-mail: webmaster@tbyte.com

★ *Sanctum* is a two-player, turn-based war game for collectable card game fans.
Web: www.digitaladdiction.com
E-mail: testing@digitaladdiction.com

★ *The Grid*, from Dot Studios, is a frantic action game with hundreds of players.
Web: www.gridgames.com/tester.html
E-mail: webmaster@gridgames.com

★ Currently up on Microsoft's Net Gaming Zone, *Ultracops* is set to be a popular on-line strategy blast.
Web: www.zone.com/asp/script/default.asp?game=ultr
E-mail: webster@vr1.com

★ *Nexus: The Kingdom Of The Winds* is currently free to enter and has no registration.
Web: www.nexon.net/kingdom
E-mail: daedalus@nexon.net

Did you know 60% of new PC games will feature 3D graphics?

SPECTOR SHOOTS UP

Ion Storm have licensed Epic's *Unreal* engine for their next title, *Shooter*. The game is linked with a lot of talk about gunplay in the White House. "It's the first technology I've seen that really allows us to create conventionally realistic places. We can do cool outdoor stuff and still let the player enter a geometrically complex building and walk around," exclaimed Spector, famed for the *Ultima Underworld* series.

UNDER THE SEA

Net gaming service On-line are to release Net submarine game *Iron Wolves*. The game has been available as a free beta test, enjoyed by over 25,000 players worldwide. Now the test is over, On-line is to charge £29.99 for software and a £6 fortnightly subscription rate. You can sign up for a free trial game in which you pilot a weaponless tanker ship. See www.on-line.co.uk.

JUSTIFIABLY ANCIENT

Find the legendary golden fleece, thanks to Australian developers Megamedia who have plundered the story of Jason And The Argonauts for their upcoming RTS. *Ancient Conquests* should be available at the end of the summer. See www.ancientconquests.com.

BUY ONE...



PLAYSTATION ZONE



With two million PlayStations in this country, some of the PSX games transferring to PC must be worth more than a poke in the eye

★ WORDS David McCandless

A PlayStation game to be very concerned about

Nom de plume: *Resident Evil II*.

Histoire: Follow-up to the very well-received but hardly ground-breaking *Resident Evil I*. Details the exploits of a load of no-neck marines as they take on hordes of the undead.

Smells like: *Alone In The Dark*/*Aliens*/*The Thing*/*Zombie* films/*George Romero*.

Storyline: Picking up from where the last game ended (ie in blood-soaked disaster), Raccoon City has been infested by zombies and horrible icky creatures. You can play either Zak, a rookie policeman, or Clare, each of whom has a different CD and a different route through the story.

Big deal: Awesome atmosphere; flawless 3D character animation; impressive rendered visuals; strong puzzle element; engrossing story; great gore: people being shot in half; dismemberment; offal fireworks, etc.

Low point: Too much too-ing and fro-ing. Role-playing elements of the



gameplay may be a little slight for hard-nosed PC adventurers.

Tech stuff: 3DFX version should look substantially better on the PC.

Personal impression: I played this game for 24 hours straight. No sleep. When was the last time you did that?

PLAYSTATION FIVE MOST WANTED

As voted by PC Zone readers

1. *Gran Turismo* (Sony)
2. *Resident Evil II* (Capcom)
3. *Tekken 3* (Namco)
4. *Metal Gear Solid* (Konami)
5. *Need For Speed 3* (Electronic Arts)

Two to watch...



KULA WORLD (Sony)

This is going to be big. We've been starved of a coolio puzzle game for a while now, so Scandinavian-coded

Kula World is perfectly timed. It's an insane 3D logic puzzler with you controlling a beach ball around Escher-style gravity-defying levels. And, hurrah, it's got nothing to do with Kula Shaker. This one will be popping up on the PC very shortly.



METAL GEAR SOLID (Konami)

Hugely anticipated 3D shooter from Konami, almost certainly stooped in

Super Contra-style tradition and pomp. Set on a colonised moon of Jupiter, *Metal Gear Solid* promises big bangs for your bucks – and a swanky 3D engine that many believe will set standards for years to come. Then again, maybe we're getting ahead of ourselves?

REVIEWED



GRAN TURISMO

Stunning 'realistic' racing game with massive range (150) of proper cars (Nissan, Toyota, etc), loads of tracks, and hyper-realistic TV-style replays. Its soundtrack features songs by Garbage, Ash and Chemical Brothers. The PC version should look even better in 3Dfx, and should go a lot further than the typical two-player split-screen mode.

PCZ VERDICT

9/10



DEATHTRAP DUNGEON

Yet to materialise on the PC, but looking like a sodden attempt to recast *Tomb Raider* in a Dungeons 'n' Dragons wet dream. Clingy halter-top replaced by bosom-enhancing chest plates; tigers turned into dragons; items to spells; engaging gameplay changed to not quite as engaging. (See PC review on page 96.)

PCZ VERDICT

7/10

COMPETITION WIN A COPY OF RESIDENT EVIL II

We have – woohoo! – one copy of *Resident Evil II* PlayStation to give away. Answer this relatively simple poser and send it in by Tuesday 18 June and it could be yours. The first correct entry out of the hat wins this über gore 'em up.

QUESTION: In *Resident Evil II* you play two characters. What are their names?

Send your answers (and your name and address would be, like, dead handy) to: Why Oh Why Did They Call It Resident Evil?, PC Zone, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

No affiliates of Sony, Virgin or members of the undead may partake. The Editor's decision is final, etc, etc. All the usual competition rules and conditions apply. So there.



GET TWO FREE



WOMEN LOVE IT!
www.CapitalFM.com/soforhim



Desert Island CDs

Shiny Entertainment's Dave Perry selects the games he'd take with him to a desert island

- ★ 1. *Myth* (Bungie)
- ★ 2. *StarCraft* (Blizzard)
- ★ 3. *Grand Theft Auto* (DMA Design)
- ★ 4. *Quake II* (ID)*
- ★ 5. *VR Pool 2* (Interplay)

* Choice if only allowed one.

Dave says...

"My most important program would be that castaway desert island screensaver thingy that everyone used to have. That little guy had lots of neat ways to attempt to escape the island. It also takes months and months to watch it! Also, please could I have a direct PC satellite internet link for multi-player?"



RAVEN TURN MERCENARY

Soldier Of Fortune magazine to be the basis of a PC game

★ REPORT Phil Wand

The infamous gung-ho monthly is one of those peculiar US-only institutions - like Jerry Springer, suicide cults and snipers.

As well as reporting on frontline action, it advocates military action, the right to bear arms, and Kalashnikovs to those who can afford them.

The first Activision title to bear its name will be an as yet unnamed *Quake II*-powered homicidal blastfest that will recreate a world of covert operations, international intrigue and big explosions. You play the part of hired guns taking part in operations at political hotspots all around the globe.

Raven have a successful US TV series (starring Tom Berenger) to fall back on, and the current trouble in Sierra Leone will doubtless help keep *Soldier Of Fortune* in the news for some time to come. Don't be surprised if the MoD become interested at some point.



There are a number of *Soldier Of Fortune* add-ons currently available for the original *Quake*.

That's the C

Eidos perpetuate the virtual crime scene with a new mobster sim called *Gangsters*

★ REPORT Charlie Brooker

A horse's head under the duvet. An offer which can't be refused. Joe Pesci shouting the word 'fock' a thousand times. Guns. Car bombs. Mutilated informers dangling from meat hooks. Yes, folks, we're talking about the Mafia.

Here's an all-new example of mob-related fun: *Gangsters* from Bristol-based developers Hothouse Creations. Set in a prohibition-era 'Chicago-style city', *Gangsters* affords aspiring ne'er-do-wells the chance to establish and run a shadowy criminal brotherhood of their own.

You view the action from an isometric perspective reminiscent of *SimCity 2000* and the first *Syndicate* title, and its makers claim the game provides a sexually arousing blend of turn-based resource management and real-time St Valentine's Day Massacre-style action, set against an event-driven storyline.

Would-be Al Capones are promised the chance to control all aspects of 'da business', including bribing jurors, torching the premises of anyone who refuses to cough up for



Nice idea, but Bristol?

'protection', mowing down rival gangsters, and issuing orders to vicious-looking cohorts with names like Spats, Vinny and Alfredo 'Shoots People With Guns' Spinetti.

Furthermore, the game environment itself sounds impressive in scope, encompassing 1,000 city blocks inhabited by 2,000 civilians, 2,000 business owners, 400 gangsters, 250 police officers, 100 FBI men and 10 burly, frustrated sailors with hands like plates, who don't ask any questions, don't have to be back on ship till dawn and know the location of a quiet secluded alleyway in mincing distance.

Gangsters is released through Eidos in October, and doesn't actually have any sailors in it at all.

SHOP AROUND



Which is exactly what we did - saving you the legwork!

What were we buying?

	HMV	Virgin Megastore	Electronics Boutique	Computer Exchange
★ Righteous 3D II (Orchid)	249.99* ¹		249.99* ¹	
★ Max! Gamer 3D 2 PCI				199.99
★ Speaker3 (Creative)	169.99	99.99* ²		
★ X36F Flight Controller (Saitek)	69.99	49.99		
★ Forsaken (Acclaim)	34.99	34.99	34.99	
★ Incoming (Rage)	34.99	34.99	34.99	
★ Star Wars Supremacy (LucasArts)	34.99	34.99	34.99	22.00* ³
★ World Cup 98 (EA Sports)	34.99	34.99	34.99	18.00* ³
★ Grand Theft Auto (DMA Design)	34.99	34.99	34.99	
★ StarCraft (Cendant)	34.99	34.99	34.99	22.00* ³
★ Lula: The Sexy Empire (Take 2)	19.99	19.99	24.99	

Call: HMV Direct (Mail Order enquires)

Virgin Megastore (Oxford Street)

Electronics Boutique (Oxford Street)

Computer Exchange (Tottenham Court Road)

0990 468000

0171 631 1234

0171 637 7911

0171 419 2588

★ ¹ With *BattleZone*, *Jedi Knight* and *Incoming*.

★ ² With AWE62 sound card, smaller sub-woofer.

★ ³ Second-hand.

All prices correct as of May 26th 1998

Chicago way



Gangsters initially has a *SimCity* look and feel to it – until, that is, the little people start shooting each other...

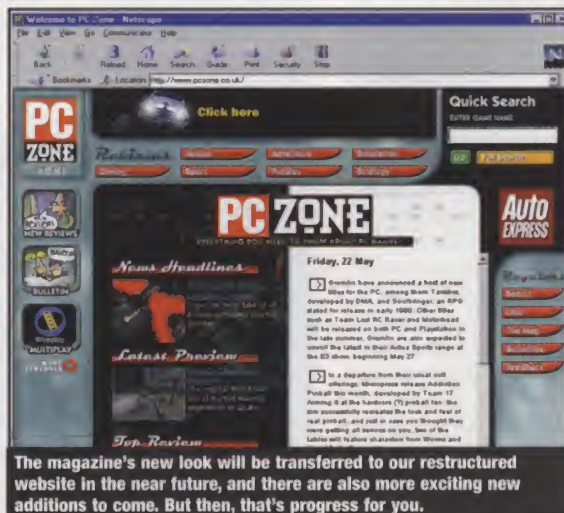
PC Zone On-line gets even better

Our website recently underwent a bit of a revamp – and here's how it's looking at the moment

The World Wide Web can be a deathly dull place on occasion. So thank Buddha for the *PC Zone* website – a place where lost gaming souls can congregate 'astride the Internet' on our very own 'virtual' museum tour of gaming past, present and future. Retaining all the usual strong points, such as authoritative reviews, previews and news, the new, improved *PC Zone* website also sports a number of enhancements to give you what we think is probably the best PC games site in the UK. As well as an improved, simplified search function and better screenshots, we have also included hundreds of new tips, walkthroughs and cheats (over 1,000), demos, patches and more. On top of that, all the new stuff will be easily traceable thanks to the site's updated 'splash' screen (the first page you come to when you visit the site – Ed), and a new graphical tagging system showing what's where in the listings.

The *Zone* team will be on hand, as usual, to answer your questions in the chat forums,

as well as listen to your feedback. You can also send in letters and subscribe to the magazine on-line. Point your Web browser to www.pczone.co.uk, enter a user name, and you're away.



The magazine's new look will be transferred to our restructured website in the near future, and there are also more exciting new additions to come. But then, that's progress for you.

For the record

Recently heard quotes

"Lara Croft exists only in computers and in the imagination... I am a real woman in every sense of the word"

Roger Wilson – the man who helped create the most famous woman in gaming history – who, following a successful operation, now goes by the name of... Sophie (source: *The People*)

"We won't delay a game just because the API isn't ready. We'll ship the games and issue a patch later"

Brad Crystal, Activision's vice president of OEM sales, recently caught napping on www.gamecenter.com

"I don't think there's anybody at Blizzard who walks around our hallways saying, 'You know, we're pretty fucking badass, aren't we?'"

Bill Roper of Blizzard Entertainment on how the success of *StarCraft* hasn't gone to their heads

"How much did you guys give *Quake II*? 97%? I reckon we're looking at the first 98/99% game here"

Epic marketing guy Mark Rein during a recent *Unreal* demo at the *PC Zone* office

"The Messiah engine is f*cking cool, and frighteningly simple" – Bullfrog's Glenn Corpes, excited about Shiny Entertainment's upcoming 3D action game

"Mark Hamill was way out of the ballpark price-wise. We're using Tim Curry"

Jane Jensen 'makes do' on *Gabriel Knight 3*. Just how big was *Wing Commander*?

BLUFFERS Guide to...

ULTIMA ONLINE

★ What is it?

The ongoing, ever-changing Internet fantasy world of Britannia, covering 200 million virtual square feet and with thousands of players living in it in real-time. Plus, thousands more creatures and non-player characters inhabit the same world at any given moment.

★ What's so good about it?

The game is persistent, meaning it will run regardless of the number of people connected to it. You can have up to five distinct characters, and are able to join in and leave at any time you choose. Game events are dynamic, meaning they are affected by the actions of all participants. For example, slaughtering a herd of cattle may result in Dragons going hungry and terrorizing the local neighbourhood.

★ What sort of system do I need?

Ultima Online is independent from the other eight *Ultima* games. It's sold on a single CD-ROM and requires a Pentium 133 processor, 16Mb RAM, at least 261Mb of free hard drive space and a Net connection.

★ Where can I buy it?

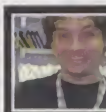
Ultima Online is available in most stores or give Electronic Arts a call on 01753 549442. For more info point your web browser at www.owo.com.

CITIES

PC Zone will be travelling the length and breadth of the country to see what you gamers get up to on your home soil. This month we check out the scene in Brum

★ WORDS Garth Sumpter

Bright lights, big city



Mark Lewis just can't keep up with the demand for second-hand copies of *Screamer Rally*.

Ever wondered where to get your games fix in Brum?

Birmingham – Britain's second city, and home to the spluttering last vestiges of the country's car industry, last seen hiding in a foxhole under the Rover plant in Solihull and waiting for the Germans to go away. After all, wasn't it here that the mighty Mini was first produced and unleashed on a trendy 1960s Britain?

Birmingham was once the centre of the industrial revolution, which left behind it a lot of grit and grime and some very peculiar accents. But not everything in Birmingham is as cringeworthy. From the grim remains of an industrially blackened city, a pretty remnant has recently emerged. Birmingham's locks and canals, which once carried coal and coke to the foundries of Britain, are now an idyllic feature of a city which boasts more miles of inland waterways than Venice.

You won't find many blockages in the PC games pipeline, either. Here in the centre of Birmingham there are no less than three specialist games shops: Games Station, Electronic Boutique and Computer Exchange,

all of them taking pride of place in the centre of this famous city.

ON SECOND THOUGHTS...

Mark Lewis is in charge of the games section of Computer Exchange, which is usually pretty busy – largely due to its throbbing section devoted to second-hand PlayStation games.

"We sell a mixture of new and used games," says Mark. "And while business is always good, we tend to find that stock levels on PC don't fluctuate very much."

So is trade slow on PC?

"Not really. Most people seem to bring games back to trade, even when they are buying a brand-new game. So for every game that we sell, we normally take one back in, too."

"It's usually the second-hand stuff that flies off the shelves, and they're normally PC games that are six months to one year old. Currently, we can't get enough copies of *Screamer Rally* to keep up."

Mark has easy access to whatever games he wants, so has very definite ideas about what he'll spend his time playing. "I love football management games, so this is a great time for me, with all the new games coming out. Especially with the 3Dfx card getting so popular. It will soon mean that everyone will have an even greater level of reality. You can see where it's going in games like *Jedi Knight* and *Battlezone*, two of my own faves."

Mark still gets completely hooked on new games though. "It's mad really," he confesses, "but I'm still playing *Quake II* at the moment. There was a time when I stopped going to bed because of it, but I think I've got it under control now!" PC



It's not sexy, it's not eye-catching... no, mate, but it's bloody huge and it's got loads of PC stuff with both new and second-hand games and a bulging hardware section. What more could your average shopping Brummie want?



Who lives in a city like this?



GARY MASTERS

24, retail, who was wandering around the shop like he owned it

Why does he shop here? "Er, because I get a huge discount," he told us. Nice, we thought. Is this the only shop in Brum that offers customer loyalty schemes like this? Gary couldn't hold back any longer. "Well, I work here and I've just dropped in on my day off!"

Is Gary really that sad? "No, but I am unfortunate," he replies. "I've had a Compaq Pressario for a few months. It's only a P166 and the guy at Dixon's didn't tell me that it wasn't easily upgradeable. I'm a little annoyed, so I keep popping into Dixon's to frighten the little shit who sold it to me."

So you're not happy with a P166? "Not for the latest breaking games, but I do use it on the Internet a lot as I prefer to play network games like *Quake II*, or Activision's *Battlezone*. I've just bought *Championship Manager '98*, which is the tops."

Any strange stuff that you get up to? "Er... well, I play emulator games – arcade *Commando* and *Wrestle Fest* are current faves of mine – but the guys in the shop get annoyed if I talk about them for too long."



TRACEY KEENAN

30, advertising sales consultant who was milling around asking about *Tomb Raider II*

Thinking of getting the latest version of the game then? "Well, I haven't really spent that much time with *Tomb Raider*. It's my flatmate's game and I think it has some rather obvious attractions for him. Me, I love watching Formula One racing, but I missed the last race as I was travelling. Luckily, a quick thrash of *F1* on the PC worked wonders. When I bought the game, I thought I'd just be interested in the management side, but it got me fully hooked in no time."

"What am I doing in here? Oh, looking for a copy of *Tomb Raider II* for my perverted flatmate. I made him promise that if I bought him the game, he'd stop shouting out things like, 'Do it for me, Lara!' and 'Just you and me, babe!' when I'm on the phone to my mum!"

INTERNET CAFÉS IN BRUM

NETPLAY CAFÉ

Birmingham only has one true Internet café, which is situated in the city centre and run by Terry Pentland. "We have NetPlay games and have just introduced a new *Quake* server. We also have all the old favourites, including *Duke Nukem*, *Red Alert* and most other NetPlay games. Of course, you can just hire a machine to hook up to the Internet, which many people do. There are even people

who come in just to look around and find out what it's all about."

NAME: NetPlay Café

ADDRESS: 8 Fletchers Walk, Paradise Circus, Birmingham B3

TELEPHONE: 0121 248 2228

WEBSITE: www.netplaycafe.co.uk

OPENING HOURS: 10am-7pm Mon-Sat
12am-4pm Sunday

COSTS: There are 15 machines available, each at £5 per hour

Feudal fighting

Activision bow politely, with news of a Japanese-style adventure game on the cards

Did you know that the cows had to come out of Carmageddon before it sold in India?

CHIN GLOVE MOVES

Jon Ritman has taken his beard to Argonaut, along with a number of his existing team from Cranberry Source. The author of such ancient hits as *Batman*, *Head Over Heels* and



Matchday – and the recent *SuperMatch Soccer* – begins work on an action/adventure game scheduled for a Christmas release.

MUSIC REVIEW

Think Garbage, and you've got Lara Croft's debut single, 'Getting Naked' (Discovery Records) down pat on two counts: firstly because it sets out to emulate the rock-a-lyric sound of the Shirley Manson-fronted combo, and secondly because, yes, it's a bit rubbish, really Rhona Mitra may be a proficient singer, but sadly her voice carries all the passion of a junior office manager recording an answerphone message.

VIVA VOOBALL VIDEO

Anyone desperate for an early look at *Viva Football* in action will have their wish granted this summer thanks to your caring, sharing *PC Zone*. In an exclusive deal, footage of the game will be featured in the video of The England Supporters Band's World Cup song 'The Great Escape'. A pastiche of the Brazil Nike advert, it also stars Geoff Hurst, Stan Bowles, Eric Hall and Gazza's ubiquitous sidekick Jimmy Five Bellies. The single is available from V2 Records now, and the game is out in September from Virgin.

ROCKY HORROR

Black Friar release *The Rocky Horror Show* in September, coinciding with the cult musical's silver anniversary. Developed by On-Line PLC with the aid of Clem Chambers (who worked on the Spectrum



original), this is a comedy adventure, with new and original songs from creator, Richard O'Brien, and narration from Christopher Lee.

Based on the 100 million-selling card game of the same name, *Legend Of The Five Rings* hits the shelves in the winter and is set to deliver a rich 3D world of authentic combat moves, weapons and landscapes from feudal Japan.

"*Legend* is one of the most detailed and original settings for role-playing ever created," says Peter Adkison, whose company owns the

original trading card game. Robert Kotick, Activision's chairman, suggests that it will exceed the standards set by *Diablo* and indeed every other game in the genre. "*Legend* provides an extraordinary depth and variety of experience," he claims.

Stepping into the open-toed sandals of a young samurai, you journey between cities to recover pieces of a sacred artefact. Skills in both magic and kenjutsu must be honed to progress. The game has 30 quests, motion-captured animations, dynamic lighting and a multi-player mode for up to eight players. Watch out for first screenshots next issue, out Thursday 9 July.

"IF I HAD 150 QUID"

Got 150 Earth pounds taking up space in your wallet? Wondering how you can 'enhance' that computer experience? Look no further than our guide to 'alternative' gaming

★ It's the World Cup once again, and what better way to celebrate than by recreating the tournament in your very own home. First step is obviously *World Cup 98* from EA Sports for a mere £34.99. Then you'll want a *Sidewinder Gamepad* for £39.99 as it's the only pad professionals would think of using. Of course, you'll want to look the part, so an official *England football shirt* is in order for just £39.99. The football mood is maintained with an (official) *England mouse mat* in either contemporary or '1966' stylee for £9.99 (with free screensaver). Next you'll want to split £20 among various *drunken homeless people* to stand around your computer to give you that 'packed stadium' feel. Oh, and with the final £5 why not buy five juicy *meat pies* to eat after each match?



Stirring up a hornet's nest

3Dfx Johnnie-come-latelys Digital Integration release details of their forthcoming Super Hornet flight sim

★ REPORT Paul Presley

Simulating the carrier-based F/A-18E Super Hornet strike fighter – the US Navy's most recent incarnation of the plane – this particular game is to feature a random single-mission generator, three campaign areas (including the recently nuclear-happy Indian Ocean), all the usual 'ultra-realistic' flight modelling, and (rather worryingly) interactive sailors on the carrier deck. Graphically, Digital Integration are making full use of 3D acceleration (finally), with fully texture-mapped terrain and dynamic coloured lighting.

Super Hornet joins a growing list of F/A-18 sims, which include I-Magic's *iF/A-18E Carrier Strike Fighter* (which raises interesting questions about DI's distribution deal with I-Magic in the States), GraphSim's *F/A-18 Korea* (PCZ #61, 90%) and their forthcoming *Hornet 4* title. The real battle for aerial supremacy begins in September, when both *Super Hornet* and I-Magic's title are due for release.



Another F/A-18 sim readies for take-off.

TITUS SPICE UP SPACE

Hot new space chick to kick evil alien butt

Set in the year 8002 in the powerful empire of Krosso, *Space Girl*, from 'high eyebrow' developers Titus, is being described as a *Wing Commander*-style futuristic 3Dfx blast-a-thon spread over 50 levels. It promises a variety of (possibly 'zany') missions, including escorting friendly ships, defending space stations and sabotaging enemy weapon systems.

Space Girl is your guide through all this, so we're expecting lots of Roger Vadim/*Barbarella*/Spice Girls-style high drama/scantiness in the process.

Not renowned for their success in PC land, Titus could redeem themselves in August when *Space Girl* comes out. We'll let you know if it's worth a 'Sherman' then.



From *Virtua Chess* to *Space Girl*: the Titus PC range is eclectic, if nothing else.

TECHHEAD



Could Sega's next-generation DirectX-compatible console be a dream come true for gamers? Tech Head brings you all the latest technical news

★ WORDS Warren Christmas

Pentium-basher?

Could Sega's Dreamcast console outshine both the PC and PlayStation?

SEGA DREAMCAST TECH SPECS

CPU: 200MHz Hitachi SH4 processor (128-bit RISC)

Main memory: 16Mb

Graphics: NEC PowerVR2-based (capable of 1.6m colours; 3m polygons per second)

Sound: Yamaha Super intelligent sound processor (64-channel ADPCM; XG sound set)

CD-ROM: 12-speed drive (reads standard form CDs and proprietary 1Gb discs)

Modem: V.34 (33.6Kbps)

Operating system: Microsoft Windows CE (customised version; supports DirectX)



Sega have announced details of their next-generation gaming console. Dreamcast is based on a 128-bit RISC-based Hitachi SH4 processor running at 200MHz, which is said to easily out-perform Intel's Pentium II series of processors used in PCs. The CD-based machine has 16Mb of system memory (over four times that of the PlayStation), and features a built-in 33.6K modem as standard to enable on-line gaming.

Dreamcast will utilise NEC/VideoLogic PowerVR2 3D graphic technology (as used for VideoLogic's range of PC-based 3D accelerators) and a customised, DirectX-compatible version of Microsoft's Windows CE operating system.

DirectX compatibility is expected to make the time-consuming task of converting a game from one platform to another extremely easy for developers, while the additional exposure of PowerVR (used in some arcade machines) will give NEC/VideoLogic an extra foothold in the PC 3D accelerator market.

Dreamcast is due for launch in Japan in November, and in the US and Europe next year. Software has yet to be announced, although as many as 100 developers – including Argonaut, Bizarre Creations, No Cliché (formerly Adeline), Red Lemon and, of course, Sega themselves – are said to have games in development.



Sega's next-generation Dreamcast console.

THE DETAILS

SUPPLIER Digital Edge

PRICE £79.99 RRP (£99.99)

RRP with *Formula One '97*

TEL 01293 538666

WEBSITE www.zye.co.uk/

Wheel 'em in

Does the F1 Sim Compact match the might of big bro?



Priced at just £80 and yet of reasonable build quality, the F1 Sim Compact is a cut-down version of the F1 Sim (PCZ #55, 92%), our favourite of all the mass-produced steering wheels on the market. Like its big brother, the steering wheel screws into a two-part base which you place underneath your monitor for stability. This is much better than the suction cups or clamp systems used by other manufacturers.

The spring-loaded, U-shaped steering wheel is very smart indeed. It doesn't feature the classy hand-stitched cover of the full version, but it does have all the crucial features – the fab F1-style paddle gear-change levers, LED indicators and conveniently placed buttons – and is mounted on a heavyweight metal column. Most importantly, it feels very good in use.

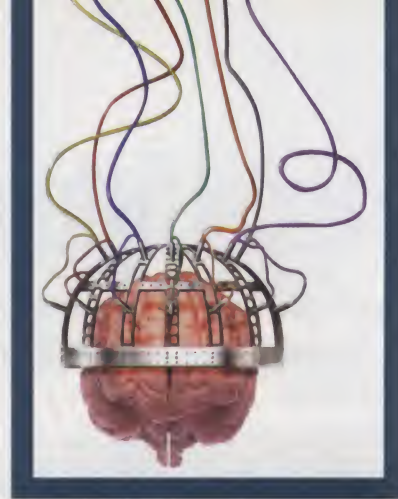
The plastic pedals are a bit toy-like and are prone to slide around a little underfoot, but some people at *Zone* found them less unwieldy than the metal pedals of F1 Sim.

Many retailers are bundling a copy of Psygnosis' *Formula One '97* (PCZ #62, 92%) with the Compact for under £100. That looks like a good deal to us, but for overall build quality you still can't beat the top-of-the-range F1 Sim (£159.99 RRP).

PCZVERDICT

86%

☛ **F1 Sim Compact:** at half the price of the full F1 Sim, it's well worth a look.



FACTCANNON

A programmable gamepad/joystick and a free-motion jypad are among the upcoming delights

★ **MICROSOFT** (www.microsoft.com) are to extend their highly successful SideWinder controller range this autumn, with a free-motion jypad called the SideWinder Freestyle Pro. Designed primarily for use with first-person perspective 3D games, it enables you to control a game by tilting the device left, right, backwards and forwards.

The device will be bundled with *Motocross Madness*, an excellent-looking motocross game which we'll be previewing next issue (out Thursday 9 July). Also due from Microsoft before the end of the year is a self-explanatory Sidewinder Force Feedback (steering) Wheel, and a set of digital surround-sound speakers. More news on these as we get it.

★ Meanwhile, **GRAVIS** (www.gravis.com) are about to launch the Xterminator, a digital/analog programmable gamepad/joystick which they describe as "the most powerful game controller on the planet". Watch out for a review next issue.

★ We've reviewed the 3Dfx Voodoo 2-based 3D accelerators from Creative and Diamond over the last two issues, but what about the third big-name model, the Righteous 3D II from **ORCHID** (www.orchid.com)? Well – quelle surprise – the board itself is exactly the same. Our advice, as previously stated, is to look for the best bundle deal and price.

★ A beta release of Windows 95/98/NT-component DirectX 6.0 has been released to game developers. Aside from improved performance and greater stability, **MICROSOFT** (www.microsoft.com) promise enhanced Direct3D and DirectDraw features, as well as a brand-new module called DirectMusic. The final version should be available to gamers in July.

★ Italian design house Pininfarina, best known for designing Ferraris, have developed a hands-free joystick/mouse PC controller in the form of a headset. No, really. More details on the UR Gear, which features integral headphones and microphone, are available from **UNION REALITY** (www.unionreality.com/).



The UR Gear: looks like the ill-fated VR helmet from Forte, but is actually a hands-free controller.

POPULOUS III

Further setbacks for Bullfrog on *Populous III* mean its release has been put back two months until 8 November. One reason for the delay is a plot



rethink: you now start off as a mortal and must work your way up to God. *Populous: The Beginning* will actually be a prequel to the first two.

KILLING JOKE

Magnetic Storm, a new science fiction multiple-media company have announced their first game. Chairman Roger Dean was responsible for a slew of record covers in the 1970s, particularly for



prog-rockers. The debut game, entitled *The Secret Of The Black Onyx*, is a quest set in 10th-century Viking Russia. Interestingly, music will be provided by Jaz Coleman and Youth of legendary apocalyptic noise terrorists Killing Joke.

BUMPER FOOTIE FEST

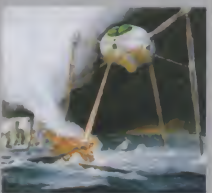
Mixing football with pinball is unorthodox, but Pin-Ball Games have taken the pinball table by the balls and come up with this surprise World Cup package. *Pinball Soccer 98*, out in July, has two tables,



two-player action, seven-ball multi-ball, and it's networkable.

SOUND AS A POUND

GT's *The War Of The Worlds* will feature Dolby Surround Sound. Rage Software's RTS take on the classic HG Wells novel will feature over 50 minutes of new recordings and interpretations, as the six-million-selling album reaches its 20th anniversary. Tunes and sound FX will be in glorious Dolby Surround.



'Photo-realistic landscapes' in *Pacific Warrior*

Fly for the Rising Sun

Multi-player support makes its way into *Ultimate Race*

Pacific Warrior offers you the chance to fly 15 different planes, including the legendary P51 Mustangs and Japanese Zero fighters, in the Pacific theatre of operations. Interactivision plan to include 50 campaigns and 20 single missions involving escort, photography, bombing and straight no-nonsense, no-backing-out-of-it kamikaze. They are also promising a photo-realistic landscape (check the screenshot above - what do you reckon?), 3D sound, smoke, fire and glare effects, SVGA 3D acceleration and multi-player dog-fighting.

As yet, there's no word of a UK release date or publisher, but you can find out more at www.iavision.com if you like the look of it.

Pirate software from T*HQ

T*HQ fly the Jolly Roger with Knoxville developers CyberFlix

Hot on the heels of the release this month of *Quake II* mission pack *The Reckoning* (check out the review on page 92), those two regular bedfellows id Software and

Activision have announced yet more reasons to clear some space in your Q2 directory. A second bundle called *Ground Zero* (15 new levels, new weapons, new monsters - details are still a little sketchy) is due out in September for those ever-so-happy owners of *Quake II*.

The new pack comes from developers Rogue Entertainment, who were responsible for *Quake I* mission pack *Dissolution Of Eternity*.

The plot concerns the evil alien race in *Quake II*, The Strogg, and their new weapon, the Gravity Well, which we anticipate will be involved in much sucking-in of passing players. Rogue are promising five new hubs, a bunch of new power-ups and a "slew" of murderous and explosive weaponry.

★ You can find more info at www.activision.com



The lip-synch and eye movement of Red Jack's characters is very accomplished and mesmerising to watch.

Lara comes alive

Joy. Rapture. At long last, Rhona Mitra's album's here



Come Alive, the album recorded by one-time Lara Croft model and current *Pepsi Chart Show* presenter Rhona Mitra, has finally surfaced following months of listless, disinterested 'speculation'. The disc in question is only available in this country via Wiltshire-based world music specialists Discovery Records. Co-written and produced on location in the Amazon (no, really) by bearded ex-Eurythmics pop bore Dave Stewart, the

album includes three remixes of *Getting Naked*, and was intended as the premiere release for Eidos-backed label Naked Records. Yet before this musical milestone made it to the nation's shelves, Eidos and Naked parted ways.

When we contacted *Tomb Raider* creators Core Design, they seemed to know nothing about the release and declined to comment on the situation pending legal advice. More news as we get it. If you want to get your mitts on a copy of said monstrosity, contact Discovery Records on 01672 563931, or enter our fantastic competition (below) to win a copy of the single! Hooray!

WIN LARA CROFT SINGLE! 10 TO GIVE AWAY!

Yes! Be the first on your block to own a copy of *Getting Naked*, the debut single from Lara Croft! Answer the following questions, write your answer



on a postcard and send it to: Let's Get Naked, PC Zone, CPCZ87B, Customer Interface, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ.

★ QUESTION: Which of the following does NOT appear anywhere on Dave Stewart's head?

- ★ A. A stupid beard
- ★ B. A pair of stupid glasses
- ★ C. A tattoo depicting a weeping clown spooning faecal matter into a large manila envelope.

DUNEBUGGY

Baja 1000 Racing will attempt to recreate the gruelling desert race held in Baja California, Mexico

Red Orb Entertainment have signed an exclusive deal with SCORE International, the organisation which produces and sanctions the Baja 1000 race, to reproduce the 1998 course. You can choose from a selection of open-wheel buggies or high-performance Trophy Trucks, and race up to 15 opponents, either computer-controlled or via the Net. Sal Fish, president of SCORE, said: "The Baja is no Sunday drive. We'll be working with Red Orb to ensure that *Baja 1000 Racing* captures the bone-jarring experience."



Granite cacti and big squashy wheels - *Baja* will have neither.

CHARTS

Hello and welcome, pop pickers, to the brand new **PC Zone** charts. Here you'll find all the movers and shakers of the moment and of yesteryear, captured on this very page for your reading pleasure

TOP 20

(compiled by Chart Track © ELSA 1998)

LW	TW	TITLE	LABEL	GROUP	WKS ON CHT
-	1	WORLD CUP 98	EA SPORTS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	1
1	2	FORSKEN	ACCLAIM	ACCLAIM	2
-	3	X-FILES UNRESTRICTED ACCESS	FOX INTERACTIVE	ELECTRONIC ARTS	1
2	4	ULTIMATE SOCCER MANAGER 98	SIERRA ONLINE	CENDANT	5
4	5	TOMB RAIDER 2	EIDOS/CORE DESIGN	EIDOS INTERACTIVE	26
7	6	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 97/98	EIDOS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS INTERACTIVE	30
5	7	STAR WARS SUPREMACY	LUCASARTS	VIRGIN	8
6	8	QUAKE II	ACTIVISION	ACTIVISION	24
3	9	INCOMING	RAGE SOFTWARE	RAGE SOFTWARE	3
8	10	GRAND THEFT AUTO	DMA	TAKE 2	26
10	11	MICROSOFT FLIGHT SIMULATOR 98	MICROSOFT	MICROSOFT	35
9	12	STARSHIP TITANIC	ZABLAC	ABLAC	7
11	13	AGE OF EMPIRES	MICROSOFT	MICROSOFT	31
13	14	STARCRAFT	BLIZZARD	CENDANT	7
14	15	TOCA TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP	CODE MASTERS	CODE MASTERS	25
16	16	MEN IN BLACK	GREMLIN INTERACTIVE	GREMLIN INTERACTIVE	28
12	17	FIFA: ROAD TO WORLD CUP 98	EA SPORTS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	26
15	18	COMMAND AND CONQUER: RED ALERT	VIRGIN	VIRGIN	77
-	19	TOTAL ANNIHILATION: CORE CONTINGEN	GT	GT INTERACTIVE	1
17	20	WORMS 2	TEAM 17	MICROPROSE	26

CHART COMMENT

It's been a busy week in chart land this month, even though the sun has been shining brightly outside. As we went to press it became quite clear that *Forsaken's* omnipresence was going to sweep aside the majority of the competition, most notably Rage's *Incoming* (which now looks like missing out on a top slot, in light of its recent nose-dive), but was kicked off the coveted Number One spot in the last minute by *World Cup 98*. Lower down though, all kinds of lunacy abounds. We still can't believe *Ultimate Soccer Manager* is doing so well; and you've got to ask yourself

what Gremlin's *Men In Black* is doing in there, haven't you? A core element of 'stayers' are evident too – *Quake II*, *Grand Theft Auto* (probably thanks to the recently released 'special edition'), *Age Of Empires*, *Flight Sim '98* (to give the game its colloquial title), and *Red* (gasp) *Alert*. 'Dropping like a stone' are four words we can think of to describe the chart performances of *StarCraft*, *Champ Manager 97/98*, and *FIFA: RTWC* – the latter presumably tackled from behind by EA's recently released *Sports World Cup 98*, which holds the trophy aloft this week.

COMPETITION

WIN! THE ENTIRE TOP 20!

PC Zone and Virgin are teaming up to give you the chance to win every game in the current Top 20. All you have to do to enter the draw is answer this simple question:

Who developed *Forsaken* for Acclaim?

★ Send your answers on a postcard to: Chart Compo, PC Zone, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. Closing date is Friday 10th July. The Editor's decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into.



THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

"Red Alert still in the charts? WOW!"
jake.murfit@virgin.net

"Flight Sim '98 is dull, if you ask me. But you won't find much more realism unless you work for British Aerospace – and that's coming from an Aerospace Engineer"
mcj16mr2@stud.umist.ac.uk

"Doom Trilogy? There are still PCs slow enough to run these games? Bloody hell, I'd go for Quake or Quake II if I were you"
mcj16mr2@stud.umist.ac.uk

Had your eye on the charts and have something to say about them? Write in and we'll print the best comments here. Send comments to: The Bloke Who Looks After The Charts, PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ, or e-mail us at editorial.pczone@dennis.co.uk.

BARMY ARMY

The British Army have decided to recruit new blood by releasing a CD-ROM. First Contact is a free educational multimedia/games package aimed at kids. The five games incorporated into the package focus on Army favourites such as learning how to assemble



an SA80 rifle, navigating your way through a snake-infested tropical jungle, and commanding a tank battalion. Enquire at your local Army 'shop' for your free copy.

CHOCKS AWAY

Aerial Combat Manoeuvres 1918 is a bold attempt to make flight sims fun, dispensing with the need for a 200-page manual. It is a shoot 'em up in a First World War setting, including recon missions and escorts. Aircraft are based around information garnered from the Imperial War Museum, and landscapes are composed of digitised aerial photography. There will be a choice of eight comedy pilots, based on national stereotypes, and multi-player options. Due November

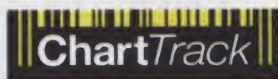
FAIRGROUND RIDE

Futuristic sport provides the setting for *Dodgem Arena*, set in 2049. Kids participate in the thrilling sport of Dodgem. They travel the globe and the solar



colonies to participate in the Dodgem League. Big ice hockey-like pucks are launched into the arena, which must then be picked up and slotted into a mobile goal. Weapons and power-ups are scattered around the arenas, of which there are eight. Unlike real dodgemen, no dirty filthy gypsies ride on the back of your car. Expect *Dodgem Arena* in time for Christmas.

RETROCHARTS



THIS TIME ONE YEAR AGO...

1 X-Wing v TIE Fighter	LucasArts
2 Theme Hospital	EA
3 Premier Manager 97	Gremlin
4 Champ Manager 2 96/97	Eidos
5 C&C Red Alert	Westwood

THIS TIME TWO YEARS AGO...

1 Duke Nukem 3D	US Gold
2 Civilization	MicroProse
3 Theme Park	EA
4 Command & Conquer	Virgin
5 Encarta	Microsoft

THIS TIME FIVE YEARS AGO...

1 The 7th Guest	Virgin
2 Sherlock Holmes 2	Mindscape
3 King's Quest 5	Sierra On-line
4 Secret Weapons Of The Luftwaffe	US Gold
5 Space Quest IV	Sierra On-line

TICKER TAPE

LAST-MINUTE NEWS, AS IT COMES IN...

STARTS++ *Age Of Empires II* has been delayed until early 1999. Developers Ensemble want to spend more time getting it right
++STOP++ The 3D engine used to power *Gabriel Knight III* is to be used in a new *Leisure Suit Larry* adventure, plus a new addition to Sierra's ever-popular

Combined exhibit space at E³ Expo Atlanta 1998 totalled 534,000 square feet!

Blood, sweat and mullets

The biggest games show in the world, the Electronic Entertainment Expo, took place in Atlanta, Georgia, as we were going to press

★ REPORT David McCandless

Every year the games industry's great and good congregate in one huge place for immense bouts of back slapping, nervous glancing and multimillion-pound dealing. Showcased for the first time are the chunks of titles which will be appearing in shop windows and on credit card statements this Christmas. Games, gadgets, peripherals, multimedia – you think of it, it was there, promoted by some microphone-wielding American with a mullet and no neck.

The show is called E³ and this year took place in Atlanta. All the big players were there: Activision, LucasArts, Electronic Arts, Sega, Sony, Nintendo and GT Interactive were showing off their wares. And decorating their stands were half-dressed nubile young maidens to draw in that important sad male dollar. Last year, the lead game show was undoubtedly *Quake II*, which took a long, leisurely

multi-coloured 3Dfx-rendered piss over all of its competition. But this year was the year of last year's also-rans, with *Daikatana*, *Half-Life*, *SiN* and *Unreal* all jostling for the 3D shoot 'em up crown.

Plus, for the first time, most of us got to play with stuff like *Populous III*, *Ultima: Ascension*, *Babylon 5*, *Force Commander*, plus the new Sega Windows-based consoles and Force Feedback sex toys.

We'll be carrying an expansive, mondo report from the sweaty show in next month's issue, complete with pictures of the *Zone* team in various compromising positions (News Editor willing...). Stay tuned.

★ You can find more info at www.activision.com

The Man who KNOWS



He gets under the skin of the software industry to bring you the latest gossip

It's been a couple of months since I wheeled out a token Lara Croft story, so focus your twisted mind on this revelation from the Cannes Film Festival. Rumour has it that Paramount's movie adaptation of *Tomb Raider* may star the generously proportioned Anna Nicole Smith, former *Guess?* girl and current Miss Republic of Cuervo Gold. I revealed months ago that Liz Hurley – recently seen splashing her kipper all over the tabloids – was in line for the part, but it now

seems that studio bosses are keen to cast a big American star. Bona fide English Rose Hurley would seem more suitable, and if it comes to a battle of brains there will be no contest, Nicole Smith recently claiming that "People videotape me as being some sort of blonde bimbo." Further rumours surrounding the *Tomb Raider* project already have Steven Spielberg mooted as director, suggesting an Indiana Jones-style action romp.

More acting-related madness sees Christopher Plummer – no stranger to interactive movies – cast in Interplay's



Anna Nicole Smith nudges Liz Hurley out of the picture.

forthcoming *Star Trek: Klingon Academy*, reprising his role from the *Star Trek VI* film. The game's producer, Raphael Hernandez, spat: "It's an honour to have Mr Plummer on board. He created this character in *Star Trek VI* and we knew if we were going to do this right and stay true to the fans, we had to get Christopher Plummer for the role of General Chang." Cast alongside Plummer is another original *Star Trek VI* actor, David Warner – of the *Wing Commander* movie – who will appear as Chancellor Gorkon. Filming for *Star Trek: Klingon Academy* is taking place in Los Angeles, and the game is set for an end-of-year release.

Star Trek, Star Trek, Star Trek. It's all I ever hear. The beast raises its nobly head further with the news that MicroProse (that's MicroProse) have canned *Star Trek: First Contact*, which was due to be the first of two shoot 'em ups based on the *Unreal* engine. They will now be concentrating their resources on the second title, the so-called *Klingon Honour Guard*.

Legal news sees Blizzard suing Micro Star for publishing *Stellar Forces*, an unauthorised add-on pack for Blizzard's *StarCraft*. A Blizzard spokesman snarled: "*Stellar Forces* meets neither Blizzard's standards nor our customers' expectations".

Thanks then, I'm now going to pull myself 'orff' into a sports sock...

WIN! AN ACE DRIVING CONTROLLER

Multi-player support makes its way into Ultim@te Race

Great though some driving games are, they're sometimes not played as their makers intended – that is, without a decent driving wheel wedged under your monitor. If you are seriously into your driving games, we've got two *F1 Sim Compact* driving wheels, each worth £79.99, up for grabs, courtesy of Digital Edge. If you're in need of convincing then turn to page 30 for the full review. If you're half the gamer you pretend to be, you'll be back to this page in seconds.

Of course, being the devious recalcitrants that we are, we've devised an ingenious way you can get your hands on one. Just answer the question below (original, eh?), plop it on a postcard before you forget, and send it off to us. First two correct answers out of the hat can look forward to a life of content/carefree armchair motoring.

QUESTION: May 1 is the anniversary of which F1 driver's death?

Send your answers on a postcard to: F1 Sim Compact Competition, PC Zone, [ref PCZ287C], Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ.

No affiliates of Sony or members of the undead may partake. The Editor's decision is final, etc, etc. All the usual competition rules and conditions apply. So there.

Over 100 new titles have been designed exclusively for play on the Internet.

SWAT range ++STOP++ Gremlin are to publish DMA Design's forthcoming *Tanktics*, according to a recent leak (not surprising considering their recent acquisition of DMA, and Take 2's acquisition of BMG Interactive – the game's previous publishers) ++STOP++ Monolith's *Riot: Mobile Armor* has changed its name to *SHOGO: Mobile Armor*

Division ++STOP++ Oddworld Inhabitants are working on a new 'Abe's' game using Epic's soon-to-be ubiquitous *Unreal* engine ++STOP++ *Discworld* developers Perfect Entertainment are suing Psygnosis for loss of earnings on previous titles ++STOP++ LucasArts plan to release a sequel to the popular but distinctly average *Shadows Of The Empire*

++STOP++ Pure Entertainment have finished development of their flashy-looking 3D shooter *Lunatik* for Eidos. So watch out for a full review next issue (out Thursday 9 July) ++STOP++ French media giant Canal+ are to launch a dedicated games-only TV channel, in conjunction with Infogrames, later this year ++STOP++ NovaLogic are

working on a real-time action game called *Delta Force* and a new flight combat sim called *MiG 29 Fulcrum* ++STOP++ Those crazy guys at Ubi Soft have changed the name of their 'animal racing' game *VR3000* to *SCARS (Super Controlled Animal Racing Simulation)* ++STOP++ Psygnosis' forthcoming *Lander* – based on the classic arcade game

of the same name – is to take full advantage of the power of DVD and Dolby Digital Surround 5.1 ++STOP++ Microsoft's battle against software piracy has ensured that one unlucky illegal trader will spend the next five years behind bars for handling stolen property. This is the first prison sentence to be handed out in a case like this ++ENDS

HOTLINE

PC Zone pulls on a pair of rubber waders and steps out into the murky waters of 'The Future' to bring you the gaming happenings of the next two months

★ WORDS Paul Rose

EVENT

3

Tonight, and every Wednesday evening, the PC Zone crew will be in residence on Wireplay where you can challenge them to a game of *Quake II*.



EVENT

7

300th anniversary of the invention of Boveril.



GAME RELEASE

10

Echolon (Midas) – Yet another real-time sci-fi wargame for your consideration.

GAME RELEASE

Hardball 6 (Electronic Arts) – An astonishing sixth installment of bat-

and-ball fun.

GAME RELEASE

Cyberball (Midas) – It's non-stop balls around here this time in the shape of a futuristic pinball sim.

GAME RELEASE

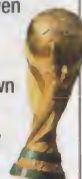
World League Soccer '98 (Eidos) – Ah! A football



game. And it's not being released to coincide with the World Cup. No. Of course not. No, no, no, no.

EVENT

World Cup 'kicks off' in France. Perhaps even you – Johnny No-Mates – will be tempted to put down your porno mags long enough to pay attention?



JUNE

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

GAME RELEASE

5

Quake II Mission Pack: The Reckoning (Activision) – Add-on for the greatest first-person shoot 'em up of all time. Even detractors of iD's gun-'em-down sequel must be intrigued by this hopefully finished return to Strogg territory (see review on page 92).

GAME RELEASE

Unreal (GT Interactive) – It's only been in development for about 47 years, but GT Interactive and Epic Megagames are confident that this highly-anticipated first-person shooter WILL be released before you succumb to some hideous bowel disorder and die (see review on page 88)



GAME RELEASE

Wreckin' Crew (Telstar) – Cartoon-style driving larks in which you join a 'crew' and go around 'wreckin' stuff. In cars.

GAME RELEASE

Ancient Adversaries (I-Magic) – Peculiar-sounding

Seven Kingdoms add-on in which you take control of Japanese, Chinese, Mayan, Indian, Zulu or Egyptian kingdoms and wage war on your opponents.

GAME RELEASE

Cricket 97 Ashes Tour Classic (Electronic Arts) – Presumably a cricket game...

Game release

Need For Speed 2 Special Edition Classic (Electronic Arts) – Console-style car-based antics. And not a game about drugs.

GAME RELEASE

Ubik (Cryo) – Surreal sci-fi adventure based on the novel by drugged-up author Philip K Dick.

GAME RELEASE

12

Industry Giant (Interactive Magic) – Crazy name... not a crazy game. Resource management in which you have to claw your way up the corporate ladder, backstabbing and brown-nosing your way past your rivals.

GAME RELEASE

Conflict Freespace: The Great War (Interplay) – A sequel to *Descent*, now a space shoot 'em up in its own right.

GAME RELEASE

Comanche 3 Gold (NovaLogic) – The long-running helicopter series gets a sort of 'special edition' make-over.

GAME RELEASE

On The Ball 2 (Funsoft) – A football management game. Horrible sheepskin coat not included.

GAME RELEASE

Adrenix (Funsoft) – 3D shoot 'em up developed by Playmates.



GAME RELEASE

Versailles 1685 (Cryo) – Adventure set in the poncy court of King Louis XIV.

GAME RELEASE

Egypt 1156BC (Cryo) – Another place, year and adventure game from Cryo.

EVENT

14

National Ride-A-Swan Day



EVENT

15

England commence their World Cup campaign by taking on Tunisia. Kicks off in Marseilles at 13.30 BST.

GAME RELEASE

3

British Open Championship Golf – Ltd. Edition (Interactive Magic) – We don't know what makes this a special

limited edition. Perhaps there's an ambient dub remix on the 'flip' side?

EVENT

12

The World Cup Final takes place today, between Israel and Pakistan. Probably. It's at St. Denis stadium in Paris, and kicks off at 21.00 BST.

FINAL!

EVENT

20

The world ends today (best use my holiday up then – Ed).

JULY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

EVENT

7

Wireplay hosts the 'Mega Red Alert Tournament' between 7pm and 10pm tonight. Piss-poor players will be laughed off their servers, so only the best should attend.

GAME RELEASE

17

Nightmare Creatures (Activision) – If Lara Croft were a Victorian adventurer who fought hordes of Lovecraftian demons through the streets of Whitechapel, and not some large-bosomed 1990s strumpet who climbs around ancient ruins



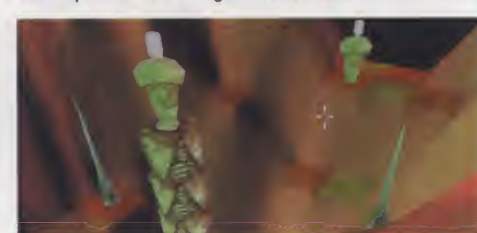
shooting monkeys, *Nightmare Creatures* would be her game.

GAME RELEASE

Sentinel Returns (Psygnosis) – We're in retroville once again, as the classic home computer hit of the 1980s returns with a *Changing Rooms*-style modern lick of paint.

Scramble your way across hundreds of surreal landscapes while avoiding

the energy-sapping gaze of the omnipresent Sentinel. Go on then.





EVENT 17

Godzilla, the first film from writer/director/producing duo Dean Devlin and Roland Emmerich since *Independence Day*, premieres. Whether the movie ditches the plotless, formulaic, eye candy of the ridiculously-abbreviated 'ID4' in favour of something a little more substantial remains to be seen.

FATHER'S DAY 21

Suggested gift ideas: contraceptives, hammers and sock puppets. Today is also the longest day of the year, and the official start of the British summer.

GAME RELEASE 22

Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines (Eidos) – A return to World War II for this real-time wargame in which you tackle the reins of a squad of ultra-tough marines. Each of your

SOFTWARE RELEASE 25

Windows 98 (Microsoft) – Here we go: sell your soul once more to the Microsoft Devil, and enjoy all sorts of incompatibility problems with the latest game releases. Not really!

Windows 98 will, of course, be completely swell – as we all know... (see feature on page 122)

GAME RELEASE
Johnny Herbert Grand Prix 98 (Midas) – We



shouldn't laugh, but Herbert is such a funny name... Anyway, dear Johnny,

possibly known as 'The Racing Rake' in his time, offers up his favourite cars and courses for you to experience. Bless.

ALSO RELEASED IN JUNE:

101 Airborne (Empire Interactive), **Fields Of Fire** (Empire Interactive), **Star Trek Starfleet Academy: Chekov's Lost Missions** (Interplay), **Cities Of Justice** (Take 2 Interactive), the **PCI 338-A3D** sound card (Aztech), the **PCI-128 Wave** sound card (Aztech), **Hardwar** (Gremlin Interactive), and **Buggy** (Gremlin Interactive)



squad members has his own personality, apparently. There's Dopey, Bashful, Doc and Whacked-Out Psychotic War Veteran With A Multiple Personality Disorder.

EVENT
England continue their

World Cup campaign (hopefully having beaten Tunisia), by playing Romania in Toulouse. Kick off is at 20.00 BST.

16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

EVENT 19

Wireplay are holding a *Jedi Knight* 'clan war' this evening. Buff the hilt of your lightsabre and ye shall be granted access.



GAME RELEASE
Vangers: One For The Road (Interactive Magic) – The exact nature of this game is being kept 'top secret', such is its revolutionary and (according to its producer), evolutionary nature. Bollocks to that – this is some sort of top-down shoot 'em up in which you drive around in a funny little tank thing.

GAME RELEASE

Adidas Power Soccer 98 (Psygnosis) – Another football game, and again not being released to coincide with the World Cup. No. Of course not.

GAME RELEASE
Dominion Storm (Eidos) – Real-time sci-fi strategy in which the player must 'pacify' the planet Phygos (for pacify read: "Stomp around killing").

GAME RELEASE
Past As Future (Cryo) – A

puzzle game developed by some Japanese bloke. The 18+ age rating raises questions over the gadgets to be featured...

GAME RELEASE
The Third Millennium (Cryo) – *Civilization*-esque strategy game which, apparently, extrapolates current census information and simulates what the world will be like in the year 2500 AD. We'll be past the silver jumpsuit and food pill stage by then, hopefully.



GAME RELEASE 26

IF/A-18E Carrier Strike Fighter (Interactive Magic) – The game, which is some sort of naval war sim, in which you control the conflict from both the cockpit of your fighter plane, and the control deck of an aircraft carrier, apparently uses a graphics routine which gives a 3D card look without the need for a 3D card. Shyeah – right.

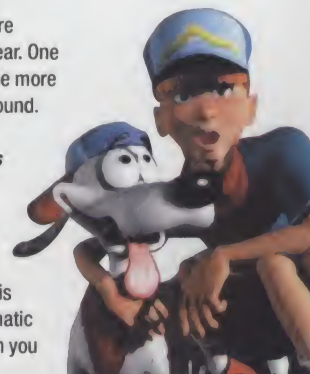
GAME RELEASE
Final Fantasy VII (Eidos) – The, dare it be said, classic PlayStation role-playing game gets a much-desired conversion to your favourite format. If you can stomach the occasionally bizarre 'Japanisms' of the storyline, you'll be in for an epic romp through magic

and sci-fi territory. Expect some of the best CGI movie sequences you ever did see. And the chance to give all the characters really stupid names, like 'Jobby', and 'Trouser Snake'.

GAME RELEASE
MAX 2 (Interplay) – It's real-time sci-fi wargame territory again – this time with a sequel to a somewhat lacklustre release from last year. One can only hope it'll be more exciting this time round.

GAME RELEASE
Heart Of Darkness (Infogrames) – French-based Amazing Studios have finally decided to finish this insanely-late cinematic platformer, in which you

star as a marketable young man who wears a colander on his head. It all looks quite lovely, and stuff, but have they left it too late in this cynical era of 3D accelerators and premium rate sex chat lines?



EVENT 23

75th Anniversary of the death of Marcus Wolme, inventor of the nipple clamp.

GAME RELEASE 24

WarGames (Electronic Arts) – The Matthew Broderick hacker movie becomes a real-time war game for the 90s.



EVENT 26

Quake II/Quake/Red Alert LAN party at The Playing Fields, 139-143 Whitfield St, London. Tel 0171 383 5850 for details.

EVENT 28

Your Uncle Dave's birthday.

16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

GAME RELEASE 31

Colin McRae Rally (Codemasters) – A rally game which, presumably, will have Colin McRae's grinning visage on the box. Whoever the hell he is, anyway.

GAME RELEASE
Dune 2000 (Virgin) – Not a new game, but an update of

'The Game Which Westwood Turned Into *Command & Conquer*'. All-new graphics, and re-mixed missions should keep fans of the original smiling, while making it a more than viable proposition for die-hards of the more recent *Command & Conquer*.

GAME RELEASE

Malkari (Interactive Magic) – With *Star Wars Supremacy* already out there, and Sid Meier about to "do it" with his *Alpha Centauri*, epic space strategy games could be the next bandwagon leaving town. Gripping onto the bumper is Interactive's

Malkari. Apparently, as many as 40 players can compete via LAN, modem or e-mail.

GAME RELEASE
F-22 Raptor Gold (Electronic Arts) – Another flight sim special edition.





**introducing a car with no boot, no stereo
and no passenger seat...**

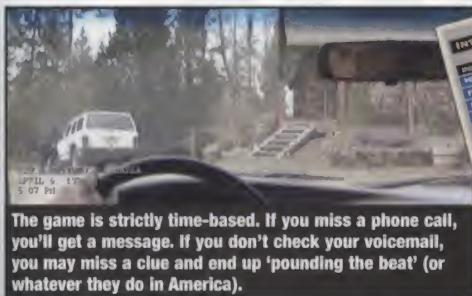


If you've got racing in your blood then take up the challenge as the Prost Grand Prix team's new driver. Jump straight into the heart of the action, choose the best setting for your Prost Peugeot AP 01, post the best times in the trials and secure the best position on the starting grid...

- 100% adrenaline rush every time you play
- Exciting multi-player mode for up to 4 players
- Editing function to customise your own teams and cars
- 9 dynamic camera angles to view the action
- Unprecedented photo-realistic circuits
- Totally accurate sound effects

simulation meets stimulation





The game is strictly time-based. If you miss a phone call, you'll get a message. If you don't check your voicemail, you may miss a clue and end up 'pounding the beat' (or whatever they do in America).



The *X-Files* game accurately recreates the unmistakable look of the TV series – ie dark and smoky, and with lots of stern people sitting in the shadows.

X-FILES

It's taken three years and over a 100 people to put together. It's a massively intricate adventure. And it's got Gillian in it

★ WORDS David McCandless

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Hyperbole
PUBLISHER Fox Interactive
WEBSITE www.foxinteractive.com
OUT End of June

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Frank Spotnitz, producer, story writer and editor from the series is involved
- ★ You get to talk and work with Mulder and Scully
- ★ You can set emotions to accompany responses

Finally, the much-fruitletly-awaited-for *X-Files* game looks set to appear this summer. It could be reluctantly described as an 'interactive movie', but better deserves the monicker: 'good-looking and seamless implementation of *X-Files* authenticity and plot-turns in a believable, well-written adventure game metaphor. With video' My words, not theirs.

Paul Provencalo, vice president of Production and Development at Fox Interactive, takes up the tale: "Three years ago we pitched the idea at Chris Carter, the

creator of *The X-Files*," he recalls wistfully. "We came up with a 900-page technical spec and script, and then for two years we developed the engine, modifying it again and again until a year ago when we started filming: two film crews; 66 people working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for seven and a half weeks."

The labyrinthine plot for the game concerns field agent Greg Wilmore, who is assigned to work with assistant director Skinner (played by scary tough slaphead Mitch Pileggi from the series) to find missing agents Mulder and Scully. The story takes place exactly between seasons four and five so: a) it fits in with the *X-Files* chronology; and b) it doesn't disturb any on-going plottery of the series.

But of course you get a cast of familiar faces from the series, including the 'X', the Lone Gunman, Cancer Man and Agent Pendril. Fox seem to be going for what Bill Hicks would call the 'authenticity dollar'.

"Oh yeah," agrees Provencalo. "We've got Frank Spotnitz, producer, story writer and editor from the series on board, plus all the props, costumes, make-up and hair

consultants, directors... They all worked on the production."

Coolio. But while most of our ideas of playing with the protagonists of an *X-Files* adventure might go like this:

>EXAMINE ME
 YOU ARE WEARING A SHEER WHITE SHIRT.
 >REMOVE SHIRT
 SCULLY REMOVES THE SHEER WHITE SHIRT.
 MULDER ENTERS...

...etc, etc, the developers at Fox and the show's creators had different ideas.

"The idea of trying to figure out what

“Trying to figure out what Mulder and Scully would do is not nearly as appealing as putting the player in the world of *The X-Files*, to interact with Mulder and Scully”

PAUL PROVENCALO, VICE PRESIDENT PRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT AT FOX INTERACTIVE

Mulder and Scully would do is not nearly as appealing as putting the player in the world of *The X-Files*, to interact with Mulder and Scully and get them to talk and work with them," explains Provencalo.

The adventure is traditional in some respects. You have an inventory and must

travel from location to location interacting with characters. But in a drastic swerve, *X-Files* enables you to choose emotions for your responses (from funny, through aggressive, to indifferent and serious) and skirts the traditional 'puzzles and keys' approach. "There are no puzzles, no random activities you need to do. Everything in this game is dealt with realistically. You figure things out by collecting the facts."

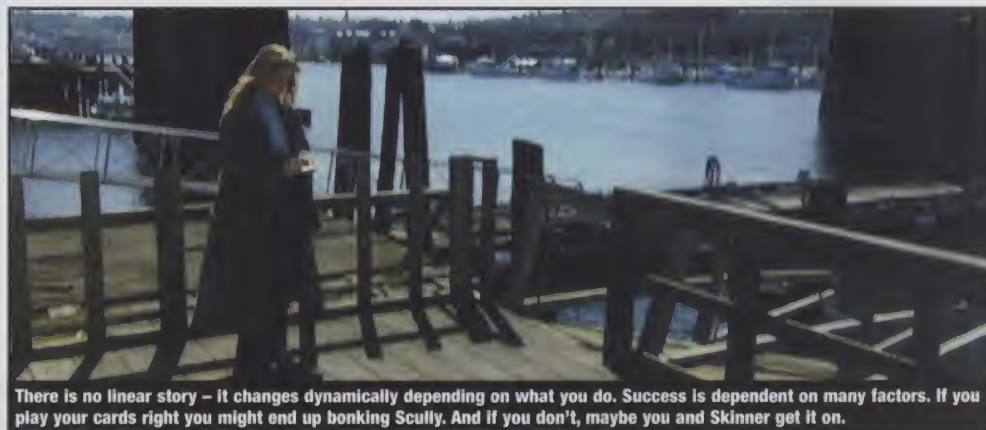
Your success and path through the game depends on your cleverness and

success as a real FBI agent – if you act like a dildo, people like Skinner will start treating you like a dildo.

And then you might be abducted. And be implanted. And then find your sister. And then find out you're half-alien... (*ad lib* for six series). [X]



Your game character gets to interact with Mulder and Scully as you search for the missing FBI agents.



There is no linear story – it changes dynamically depending on what you do. Success is dependent on many factors. If you play your cards right you might end up bonking Scully. And if you don't, maybe you and Skinner get it on.



Laptop. Cell phone. Digital camera. Super-bright *X-Files* flashlight. Lock pick. Goggles. Binoculars. All the requirements for a proper TV FBI agent.

ASTRONAUTS DO IT AT 35,000 MPH



APOLLO 14 Mission: Kitty Hawk and Antares
January 31-February 09, 1971
Alan B. Shepard, Jr. Stuart A. Roosa
Edgar D. Mitchell

ALSEP and other instruments deployed. Lunar surface stay-time, 33.5 hours: 67 hours in lunar orbit, with 34 orbits. 2 EVAs of 92 hours, 25 minutes. Third stage impacted on Moon. 42kg (94lbs) of material gathered, using hard cart for first time to transport rocks.



APOLLO 15 Mission: Endeavour and Falcon
July 26-August 07, 1971
David R. Scott, James B. Irwin
Alfred M. Worden

3 EVAs of 18 hours, 30 minutes plus 33 minute Stand-up EVA. Worden performed 38-minute trans-Earth EVA. First mission to carry orbital sensors in service module of CSM. ALSEP deployed. Scientific payload landed on Moon doubled. Improved spacesuits gave increased mobility and stay-time. Lunar Roving Vehicle (LRV). Electric powered, 4-wheel drive car, traversed total 27.9 km (17 mi). In lunar orbit 145 hours.



APOLLO 16 Mission: Casper and Orion
April 16-27, 1972
John W. Young, Thomas K. Mattingly II
Charles M. Duke, Jr.

First study of highlands area. Sealed surface experiments deployed, ultraviolet camera/spectrograph used for first time on Moon, and LRV used for second time; LRV traversed 26.7km. Three EVAs totaling 20 hours 14 minutes. 95.8 kg (213 lbs) of lunar samples collected. Lunar surface stay-time, 71 hours; in lunar orbit 126 hours, with 64 orbits. Sub-satellite released in lunar orbit. Mattingly performed 1-hour trans-Earth EVA.



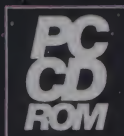
APOLLO 17 Mission: America and Challenger
December 07-19, 1972
Eugene A. Cernan, Ronald E. Evans
Harrison H. "Jack" Schmitt

3 EVAs of 22 hours, 04 minutes. First scientist-astronaut to land on Moon, Schmitt automated research station set up. LRV traverse total 30.5 km, 110.4 kg (243lbs) of material gathered. Lunar surface stay-time, 75 hours (CSM) in lunar orbit 140 hours. Evans performed trans-Earth EVA lasting 01 hour 06 minutes.



2 **ASTRONAUTS NEEDED
FOR THE ULTIMATE
SPACE PROGRAM.**

**Officially endorsed by
NASA, Apollo 18 is the
only realistic space flight
simulator for the PC.**



WINDOWS® 95

- Cyber astronaut training at NASA's Johnson Space Center
- Realistic mission control radio transmission
- Dangerous multiple landing sites
- Unlimited challenging missions
- Realistic Apollo command and lunar module spacecraft controls
- Fully comprehensive 200 page technical manual





Enforcers clean up the 'strip'.



Vans and a mini-chopper fight it out in the desert.



Death Cultists being shown the way home by trailer trash.

TRIBAL RAGE

We flew someone all the way to Talonsoft's HQ in Baltimore, USA, to have a look at this one, which means one of two things: either it's the best game since *Command And Conquer*, or we've completely lost it

★ WORDS Andrew Wright

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Talonsoft
PUBLISHER Talonsoft/Empire Interactive
WEBSITE www.talonsoft.com
OUT August '98

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Advanced AI
- ★ *Mad Max*-style desert tribes
- ★ Extensive scenario, weapon and vehicle editing
- ★ Modular game design

Talonsoft made their name with the *Battleground* series of hex-bound, turn-based wargames. So when such a specialist company launches a C&C clone, you've got to stop and wonder why. Are they cashing in – perhaps a little late – on the huge market for this type of game, or have they in fact got something genuinely new to offer?

The game is *Tribal Rage*, and it's about as far from the solidly serious *Battleground* games as you could wish to get. In fact, it's fun all the way, without an ounce of serious

simulation in it – except perhaps when it comes to the AI...

That's the bit we're all hoping is going to set *Tribal Rage* apart from the crowd, because Talonsoft pride themselves on their AI programming, and that's where C&C and most of its clones fall down. We've all seen troopers walking under tanks, tanks twiddling their turrets as their mates are chewed up just two dozen pixels away, and so-called 'scout units' that couldn't scout themselves out of a paper bag. Talonsoft hope they can improve on that kind of AI and give units some real brain power.

Looking at the early alpha versions of *Tribal Rage* on Talonsoft's huge workstations, long before anyone had thought of a name for it the game was unofficially codenamed *Bikers, Boobs And Bazookas*. Which says an awful lot about it. It's fun, it's aimed at network and Internet players as well as the lone gamer, and it has a distinctly *Mad Max* feel to it. There are six different player tribes, from bikers to ex-cops (called Enforcers), trailer trash and Amazons.

All sides field several different troop types, vehicles which they can drive and use, and the usual range of buildings and defences like walls, turrets and so on. Some teams are relatively mundane – like the Enforcers – while others are much more comical. The Amazons can fly on prehistoric flying dinosaurs, and the trailer trash include grannies on rocking

“The game was unofficially codenamed *Bikers, Boobs And Bazookas* by Talonsoft. Which says an awful lot about it”

chairs with sawn-offs concealed under their knitting.

Another good move in *Tribal Rage*'s favour is its modular game design, which means Talonsoft can add new tribes, complete with their own weapons, buildings and vehicles at a later stage.

Tribal Rage might be a late release in the genre, but that means it includes the

most popular features of games like *Total Annihilation* (a big hit with the Talonsoft design team) and leaves out the worst. A scenario editor is included, and there are four or more different behaviour modes for each unit (such as run away, hold, attack etc), plus grouping, waypoints and even unit experience levels.

You can also customise your vehicles and even some weapons, and save particular designs. The ubiquitous police squad car, for example, can carry anything from an MG to a multiple missile launcher, and can have added armour or be fitted with better engines.

All units and vehicles travel at different speeds over different terrain types. So as the scenarios are mainly *Mad Max*-style deserts, you need to make sure you design powerful vehicles adapted to move over sand. Adding armour and weapons slows down the standard chassis, of course, so careful design is needed.

Tribal Rage will be a milestone for Talonsoft, and it looks like it could give the C&C clone market a massive, much-needed shot in the arm. We'll see. [M]



Cyborgs attack the trailer trash.



All quiet in the red camp. They're back at the officers' mess watching *Ready Steady Cook*.



Right, what shall we do today? An offensive strike or a defensive manoeuvre? Toss for it.



This is hard-core. Explicit, close-up, plane-on-chopper action with no holds barred. Shock!



The green player's base takes a hammering from blue's helicopter assault team.

RETURN FIRE II

The first *Return Fire* went largely unnoticed in the UK. Will the sequel finally 'capture the flag', so to speak? We analyse the data and spit out salty globules of infoid-matter, right into your eyes

★ WORDS Charlie Brooker

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER MGM Interactive
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
WEBSITE www.ea.com
OUT July '98

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Range of locations and weather conditions
- ★ Over 50 missions and 16-player multi-play
- ★ Boasts a healthy range of military vehicles
- ★ Choice of viewpoints

Remember *Return Fire*? It was the only decent game on the ill-fated 3DO system, period. A split-screen, two-player, strategy-action fest which married the worlds of lucid arcade simplicity (previously the exclusive domain of brightly-coloured cabinets aimed at slack-jawed vandals) with wargame-a-licious strategic elements (previously the exclusive domain of fat, bearded social outcasts with ruddy cheeks and thighs like immense, clammy rolls of dough), and with a rousing orchestral score to boot. It

could've been as big as *Command and Conquer*.

Could've been. But it came too late to save the 3DO, and by the time it made the conversion to our beloved PC format, the accursed thing was yesterday's news.

Now welcome to the present day... and say a big 'aloha' to *Return Fire II*, the game EA's PR department are crassly describing as "more fun than a Middle East conflict". Presumably, the game is set to feature remarkably less genuine horror and suffering than the real 1991 Gulf War, in which tens of thousands of fellow human beings lost their lives. Nevertheless, the underlying concept remains the same as the original game: you've got a military base, and so have your mates. To win, simply infiltrate their premises, steal a flag, then return home with a big cheesy grin on your face, punching the air and humming the tune to Tina Turner's *Simply the Best*. Naturally, your enemies won't take this lying down – besides, they're after *your* flag, too – so before long you'll find yourself frantically switching between offensive



strikes and defensive manoeuvring.

The original game centred around Jeeps and helicopters; times change, and *Return Fire II* provides a far healthier range of military vehicles. Alongside the choppers and Jeeps are tanks, aircraft carriers, boats and jets, all laden with new weaponry, including user-friendly mines and missiles. Enough to keep Robin Cook answering awkward Sierra Leone-style questions until the end of time.

Environmental changes are also afoot: the game will feature a diverse range of locations, from snowy wastes to tropical jungles, each replete with its own set of changeable weather conditions. And there's a level that looks a bit like Barnsley.



Fancy graphics and 3D tomfoolery are a cert.

There's also a choice of viewpoints: either the traditional 'chase' view (with the roving camera), or a new first-person *Quake*-o-rama mode. Either way, the screen will be overflowing with all the 3D-accelerated graphics, fancy explosions and twinkly lighting effects we've come to expect in recent months.

“The screen will be overflowing with all the 3D-accelerated graphics, fancy explosions and twinkly lighting effects we've come to expect recently”

What's that, Sooty? How many missions are there? Why, there are more than 50 of them, you know! Multi-player options? Of course! Up to 16 people can join in at once! Sorry, Sooty – what was that? Yes, I *did* wash my hands this morning. Hmm? Did you say something else? Oh, yes. It'll be out in July, apparently. And stop waving that wand in my face. It might go off. ☹

FROM JULY,
WE'LL SHOW
YOU ANOTHER
SIDE TO
YOUR PC.



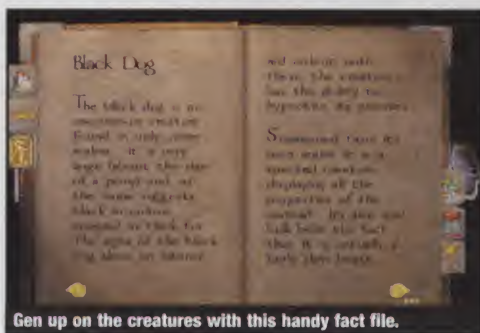
This is a power point. Controlling these is crucial to success.



Meteor spells are particularly impressive.



A classic fireball fight. Cool.



Gen up on the creatures with this handy fact file.



Exploding dogs. That should go down well with the RSPCA.

MAGIC AND MAYHEM

A real-time strategy game with the tactical depth of *X-COM*? Sounds too good to be true, but then what do we know?

★ WORDS Chris Anderson

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Mythos Games

PUBLISHER Virgin

WEBSITE www.vie.com

OUT September 1998

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Up to 36 players on the Internet at any one time
- ★ Based on popular Greek and Celtic mythology
- ★ High-end, 16-bit colour graphics
- ★ Large and varied gaming environment

Mythos Games were arguably the first developers to make turn-based games trendy when they released the first episode in the *X-COM* series. Their latest title is something of a departure for them, then – a fantasy-based real-time strategy game which draws its inspiration from popular mythology. *Magic And Mayhem* is also the first game from Mythos to use high-end, 16-bit colour graphics (it's certainly a far cry from the simplistic and sometimes crude graphics evident in the *X-COM* series), although the

familiar isometric view and use of sprites – which have become something of a hallmark for Mythos games on the PC – have thankfully been retained.

The game follows the exploits of a young wizard who inherits his crazy uncle's citadel. Foolishly thinking that he has the ability to create all manner of interesting things through the use of magic (which runs in the family), he promptly conducts a few experiments of his own. It all goes predictably wrong, of course, and he finds himself lost in an alternative reality with no obvious way home. The bad news is that the unfortunate wizard in question is played by you. The good news is that you get a book of magic and an ornate box which will convert mana into powerful spells.

The game environment will allegedly be large and varied, with three realms to explore: Celtic, Greek and Medieval. Mythos assure us that each realm will feature historically accurate mythology, architecture, and even flora and fauna.

A realistic environment, then, which should set a suitable backdrop for the

magical battles which will inevitably ensue as you travel the realms conjuring up all types of horrible, nasty things to foil enemy wizards (who will no doubt be doing exactly the same thing back to you). The key to success in each region is the acquisition of power points, which increase each wizard's mana according to how many power points they own. This will bring a strong strategic element to the proceedings, as you will have to balance your time between acquiring new power points to make them stronger, while at the same time defending the areas you already control.

Multi-play options include standard network play and support for up to 36 players on the Internet at any one time. Mythos claim that their unique blend of broad-band strategic play and narrow-

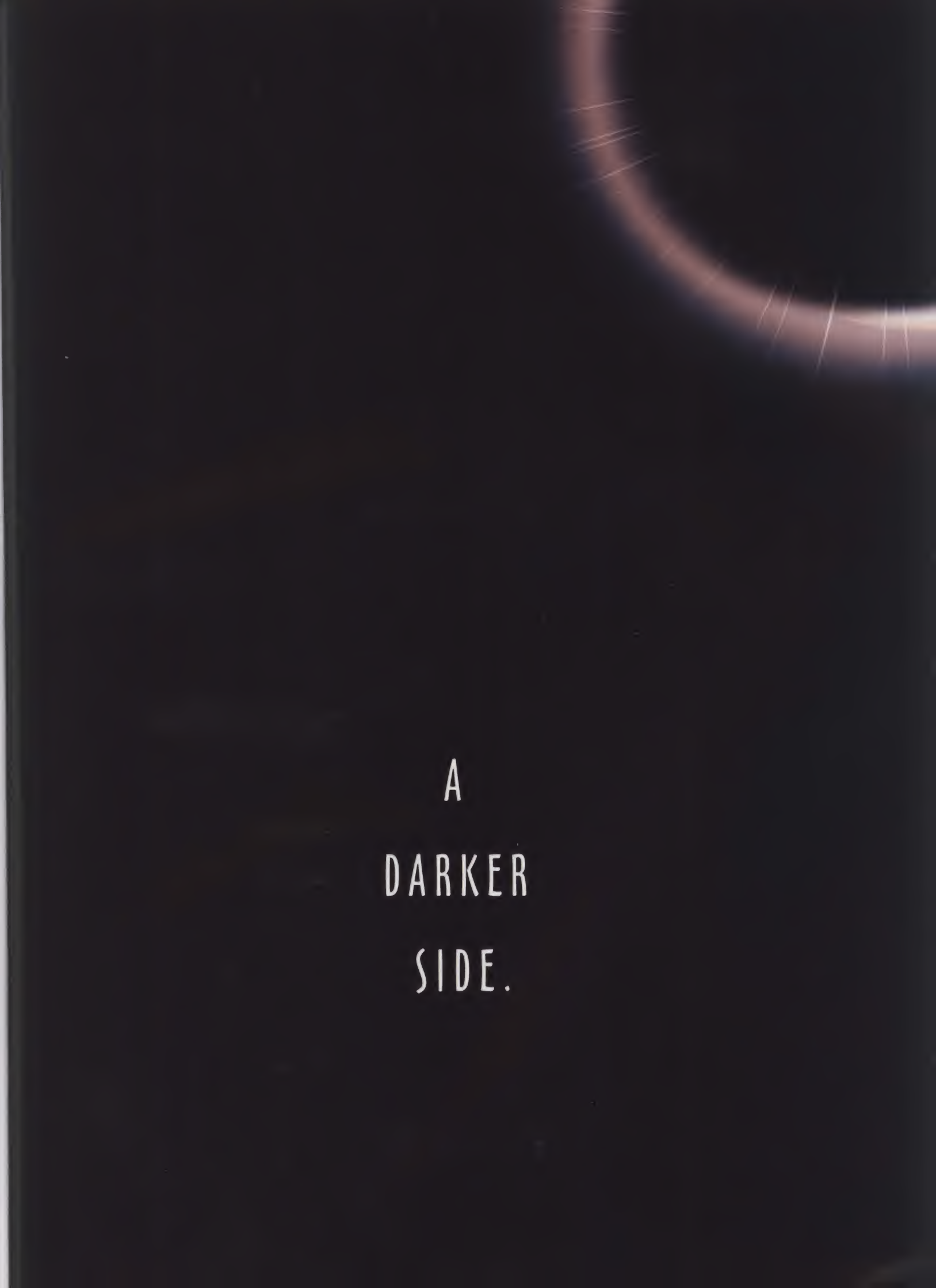


Hectic battles are commonplace in *Magic And Mayhem*. A bit like this one, in fact.

“Mythos claim that their unique blend of broad-band strategic play and narrow-band tactical combat will make *Magic And Mayhem* one of the most playable Internet games ever”

band tactical combat will make *Magic And Mayhem* one of the most playable Internet games ever.

With the early version of *Magic And Mayhem* we saw already looking pretty hot, the safe money is on Mythos adding another impressive title to their illustrious back catalogue. [27]



A
DARKER
SIDE.



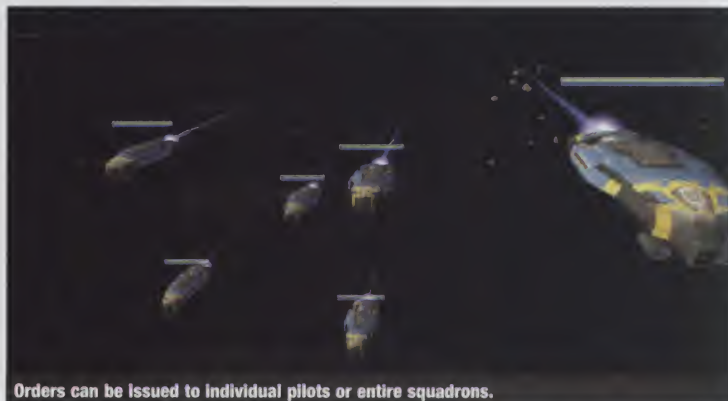
Resources can be mined from asteroid fields and gaseous nebulae, all in true 3D.



Ships behave in a realistic manner, with pilots pulling all sorts of manoeuvres mid-battle.



Each race has over 25 different types of spacecraft to utilise.



Orders can be issued to individual pilots or entire squadrons.

HOMEWORLD

You've been crying out for originality for ages now,
and finally it looks like you're going to be rewarded.
We look into the future and we're impressed

WORDS Paul Presley

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Relic Entertainment

PUBLISHER Sierra

WEBSITE www.sierra.com

OUT Late '98

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Storyline based on TV classic *Battlestar Galactica*
- ★ True 3D *Star Wars*-style space game
- ★ Impressive AI
- ★ Innovative, fresh approach to the strategy genre

Tiberian Sun. *KKND 2*. *Wargames*. *Dune 2000*. *War Of The Worlds*. *MechCommander*. *Total Annihilation II*. *Dominion*. *M.A.X. II*. Spot the difference.

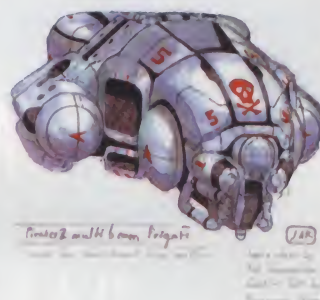
Truth is, there isn't much. Beyond graphics and presentation and the odd AI routine, none of the above are going to be very different. The developers won't admit it, and the press will hype each title as the "best thing ever" every month until they've all been released. But you and I know that, deep down, they're all the same. And so does Alex Garden of Relic Entertainment.

"There were 680 computer game titles released last year," he states. "How many did you buy? It's like, how many times do I have to go and get burned before I'll stop? Well, f*** that. From now on you're going to be seeing some serious shit." Relic put innovation and freshness above everything else. And looking at *Homeworld*, their first ever game, it shows. Take the strategy genre, then say: "Sod the C&C model, we're doing our own thing," and you've got the spirit that lies behind *Homeworld*.

It's a true 3D strategy game, set in the depths of space and revolving around an ancient race that have just found out who their true ancestors were. Gathering together a rag-tag fleet, they set off across the galaxies to find their home, pursued by an evil alien race intent on wiping them out.

Yeah, you're probably thinking *Battlestar Galactica*. Correct. Award yourself a clever point.

"About two years ago I was having a conversation with some friends about how much we loved *Battlestar Galactica* and wouldn't it be great if it was back on TV," explains Garden. "We were also talking



"Wouldn't it be great if you could have a 3D game that looked like you were watching *Star Wars*, but had a storyline like *Battlestar Galactica*?"

ALEX GARDEN, RELIC ENTERTAINMENT

about how much we loved *X-Wing* vs *TIE Fighter*, but how all you could do was pull back, pull left, and so on. So I started thinking to myself, 'Wouldn't it be great if you could have a 3D game that looked like you were watching *Star Wars* but had a storyline like *Battlestar Galactica*.' And the game just came to me. Like a flash."

Look at *Homeworld* in action and it shines like a beacon of original thought in a genre devoid of any real innovation. "The working title for the game was



Large ships are used mainly for repair, research, construction and as docking bays for small ships.

Spaghetti Ball," says Garden, "because in my head I saw this strange ball of fighters flying around, with trails flying out behind them, and a big sphere surrounding them which you could move around."

And that's pretty much how the game works. *Homeworld* boasts some very impressive AI. Watching the space battles you do indeed get the impression that you're watching a massive multi-player on-line action game as ships whizz about on-screen, pull evasive manoeuvres and sneaky offensive tactics. Pilots gain individual experience with successive battles, and you never feel as though you're watching 'generic' units in action.

Homeworld is impressive. No bones about it. It looks impressive, sounds impressive and plays impressively. From what we've seen so far, it'll have as much in common with other strategy titles as *Anthea Turner* does with quality television.

And after *Homeworld*? Garden just smiles, leans back and says quietly: "Our next project is going to blow the shit out of *Homeworld*." Let's just hope Relic don't try to run before they can walk. [E]



BEST SCRIPT

You play Andy. Your teacher hates you.
You're petrified of the dark.
Worse still, your best mate and faithful dog
Whisky is snatched away by the
Forces of Darkness. Nightmare.



BEST CASTING

Tooled up with a plasma gun, you embark
on a brave rescue mission climbing, twisting,
swinging and blasting your way through
8 huge 3-D Studio rendered worlds infested
with monsters, phantoms and the
Master of Darkness. You're not alone though.
You've the Amigos to guide you.



BEST ANIMATION

PLAY YOUR PART

IN THE EPIC

ADVENTURE GAME

THAT ECLIPSES

ALL OTHERS.

HEART
OF
DARKNESS
PLAY YOUR PART IN IT



BEST GAMEPLAY

An epic adventure six years in the making,
Heart of Darkness seamlessly blends over 30
minutes of breathtaking movie animation
with some of the most challenging
gameplay ever seen on the PC.
Immerse yourself into your role.
Enter the Heart of Darkness.



BEST SPECIAL EFFECTS



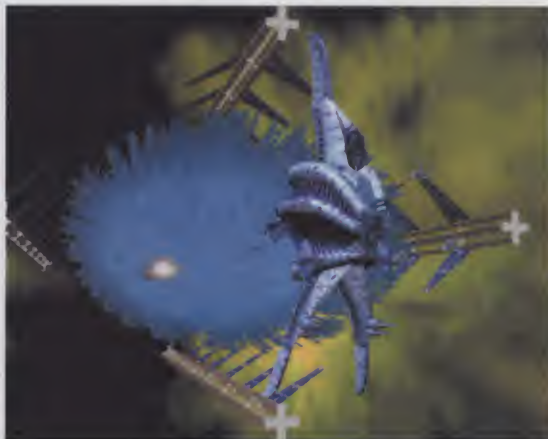
HOTSHOTS

PC Zone's regular gaming update page returns with further news of Sierra's forthcoming *Babylon 5*. Plus loads of other goodies, including an on-set report from the new *Wing Commander* movie

BABYLON 5

★ Cendant/Sierra • Out spring '99

Fans of the superb *Babylon 5* TV series will probably know that Sierra have been granted the rights to produce the first in a series of *B5* games. The first will be an *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter*-style combat sim but with a large strategic element, using graphics that have been taken directly from the animations used on the show. Everything is to scale, right down to the five-mile-long station, and all the races seen in the series are featured in the game. You take the role of a young Earthforce pilot, and FMV scenes have been shot using stars of the TV show to further the game's storyline. *B5* is set for a spring 1999 release and looks like it's going to be big. Stay tuned for more.



TIGER WOODS 99

★ EA Sports • Out summer

EA have issued the first in-game screenshots of their Tiger Woods-endorsed golfing sim, *Tiger Woods 99*. In it, you can play as or against the Woodster, get advice on tricky shots via Tiger Tips video sequences, and compete against PGA pros from around the world.

There will also be full 3D accelerator support and moving cameras to follow each shot down the fairway. Crowds gather by the side of each hole to watch your progress, changing in size depending on your prowess. Full Internet support will also be available via EA's gaming servers. You can 'get Wood' later this summer, and we'll bring you a full review then.



ODT

★ Psygnosis • Out TBA

Psygnosis' in-house action/adventure *ODT* (which is still a working title, we're told), is looking very promising indeed. As previously noted, the game will assume a third-person perspective, but from a more 'zoomed-out' perspective than similar games such as *Tomb Raider*.

As you can tell from these new shots, *ODT* will be fully 3Dfx-ed up – spiced up with an array of lighting and atmospheric

effects such as thunder, rain and lightning. Although *ODT* is set to be more action than adventure, Psygnosis' Paris-based development team assures us that there will be plenty of puzzles to keep you occupied throughout the hugely varied mission tree. They are also planning to tie all this together with numerous 'in-engine' cut-scenes, as well as all the usual pre-rendered tosh. Keep games 'live' we say.



WING COMMANDER: THE MOVIE

★ Digital Anvil • Out early '99

New details regarding the upcoming *Wing Commander* movie (currently shooting in Luxembourg) have been dislodged from the *PC Zone* News Bowl, bringing with them a steaming panful of on-set snapshots.

According to shadowy rumour-mongers, the storyline is set *before* that of the recent games – which explains why Mark 'Skywalker' Hamill isn't playing lead character/hotshot pilot Christopher Blair this time round (he's just too old, bless him). That role goes to Freddie 'I Know What You Did Last Summer' Prinze Jr, while the part of Maniac is filled by Matthew Lillard, best known for playing sniggering, stab-happy teen-slayer Stuart in Wes Craven's ironic slash-'em-up *Scream*.

Apparently, we can expect non-stop action: the film is described as "a heavy war movie set in space", and *not* a *Trek*-style space opera. Still, for now, kick back, have a pie and check out these pics – because it ain't out for a while.



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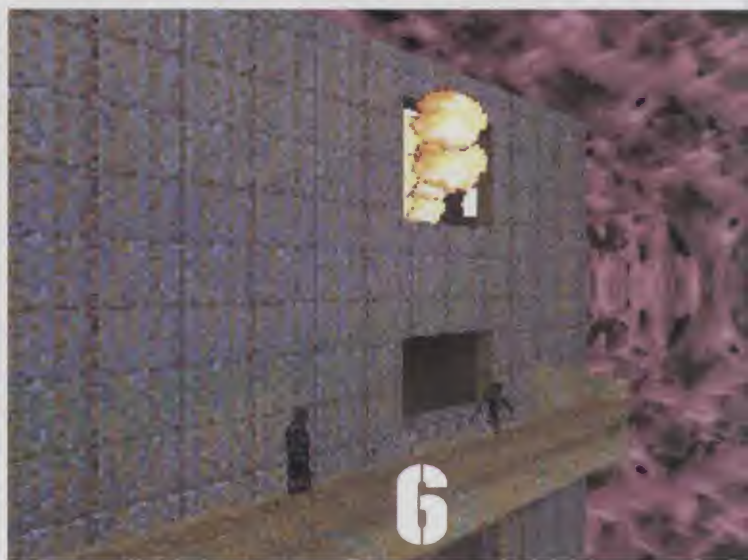
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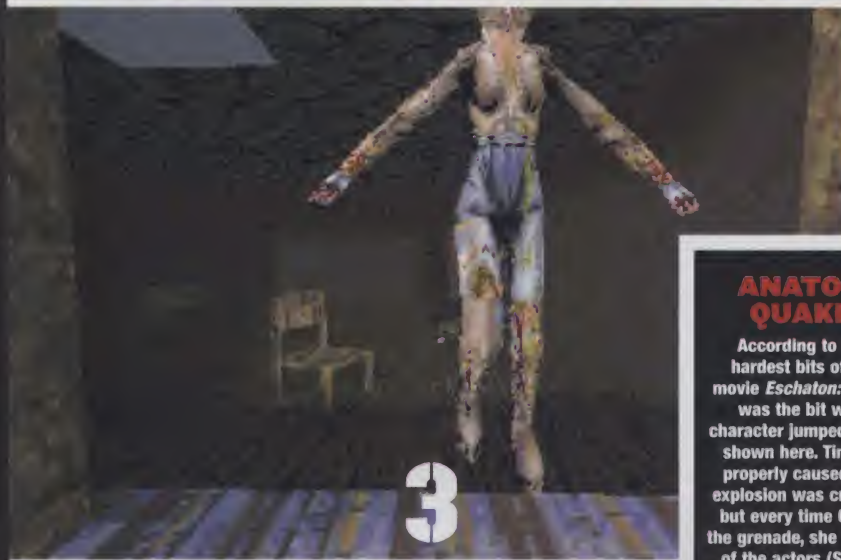
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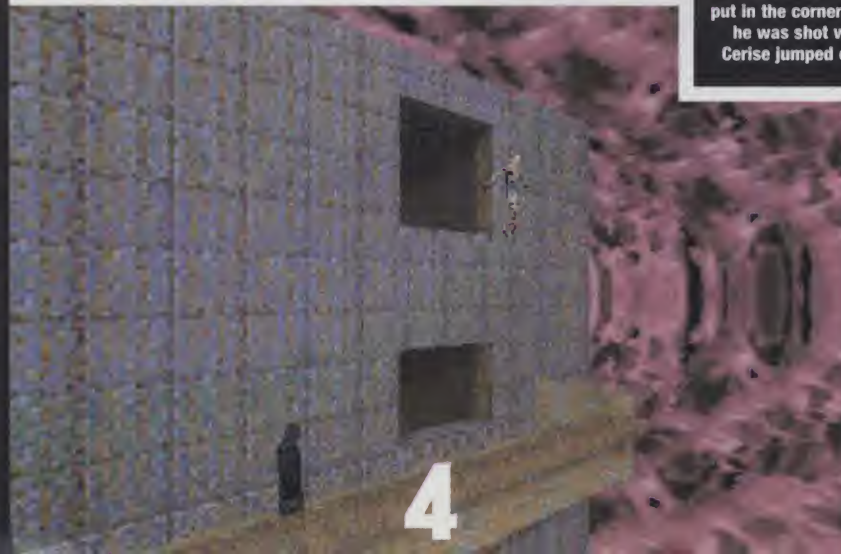
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ANATOMY OF A QUAKE MOVIE

According to Hugh, one of the hardest bits of his debut *Quake* movie *Eschaton: Darkening Twilight*, was the bit where the central character jumped out of the window, shown here. Timing the explosion properly caused the problem. The explosion was created by a grenade but every time Cerise jumped over the grenade, she blew up! Finally one of the actors (Simon Proctor) was put in the corner by the window and he was shot with a grenade as Cerise jumped out of the window.



4



8

OBSESSED!

with...

QUAKE MOVIES

CASE HISTORY



#1 THE QUAKE FILMMAKER

NAME The Nomad

AKA Hugh Hancock

AGE 20

LOCATION Edinburgh

OCCUPATION Student / journalist / UK representative for a US RPG company / partner in a games shop. Oh, and now a *Quake*-based filmmaker.

OBSESSION Making movies using the *Quake* engine.

CONDITION BEGAN Late '96

HISTORY OF CONDITION His first ambitious *Quake*-generated movie production premiered at the beginning of this year to on-line critical acclaim. Won a *Quake* movie Oscar for best plot.

OUTLOOK Excellent – now working on an even more ambitious sequel.

In the first in a regular series, *PC Zone* profiles the people who use their PCs for something other than simply playing games – and who do it with a passion.

★ WORDS Adam Phillips • PHOTOS Mark Gould

SEE WHAT ALL THE FUSS IS ABOUT



We've put one of Hugh's *Quake* movies onto this month's CD-ROM so you can see what all the fuss is about. *Eschaton: Darkening Twilight* can be found in the 'Editorial' folder of our CD or check out the Editorial tab if you're using the browser. Check out the CD pages, starting on page 144 for details of how to get it running.

Get you ass out there and make a movie, because I'm telling you, Hollywood is ripe for the taking," wrote Robert Rodriguez in his 1996 book *Rebel Without A Crew*. You see, Rodriguez directed a movie called *El Mariachi* at the tender age of 23. He took it to Hollywood and landed himself an agent. Oh, and a couple of movie deals – remember *Desperado* and *From Dusk 'Til Dawn*? Not bad, considering the original film that started it all only cost a paltry 7000 bucks to make.

The story's the stuff of legends – that Hollywood dream come true. From zero to hero, seemingly overnight. Meanwhile, back on planet earth, the idea of even drumming up £3500 and a one-way ticket to LA (plus accommodation) is still outside the reach of most of us. When balancing the books at the end of each month, even the shoestring-budget filmmaking of Rodriguez seems insurmountable when confronted by mortgage payments and rabid credit card bills.

Or is it? *Quake* launched itself on the gaming world with all the predicted hype and fanfare. Gamers bought it in droves; PC mags went crazy; a new

gaming culture was born overnight on the Net; and, in the background, a new form of filmmaking quietly slipped in the back door, according to 'those in the know'. The kind of filmmaking that anyone with a half-decent PC, a Net connection and a copy of ID Software's seminal classic could get stuck into – the *Quake* movie.

ONE MAN'S SUCCESS...

'*Quake* clans' began to spring up, pumping out short demos using the *Quake* engine as something akin to a virtual studio complete with pre-rendered characters (see How Do They Do



Robert Rodriguez reveals how he made a movie for \$7,000 but with *Quake* all you need is time.

Editing the movie is a labour-intensive, time-consuming process – Hugh's first effort took five months to complete



QUAKE – THE FEATURE FILM

No, James 'Titanic' Cameron isn't planning to do a *Quake* movie at any time in the near future, but one Stephen Nightingale, aka Land Shark (to his mates), is. He's hoping to be the first to crack the 60-minute plus running time with his debut *Quake* feature *Redemption*. The plot is strictly under wraps, but it features a large cast including the Navy Seals, the President of the Global Government and the Russian Ministry, and locations including Chicago, Washington DC, Moscow and London.

Stephen's reasons for undertaking such an arduous task are pretty straightforward. "Well, most *Quake* critics have said about *Quake* movies: 'I liked this film, but I wish it was longer...' I and the rest of us making feature-length films are taking that to the extreme. Yes, everybody doesn't like to wait forever to download a 21Mb movie, but watching movies for five minutes doesn't appeal to everyone else either. I guess we're the cure for the man with *Quake* and too much time on his hands."

Stephen will be employing unique techniques for the filming. Like stunt co-ordinators on real movies who punch buttons to trigger explosions and falling buildings on cue, he's planning to do the same by having a multitude of control boxes with an extensive team ready to set off the effects when needed. So ambitious are his plans that he's looking for volunteers from all over the world to help out with modelling, coding and even geographical research. E-mail him at StephenDNightingale@worldnet.att.net if you're interested.



Hugh hard at work scriptwriting, which he describes as the most crucial part of the film-making process.

“I've seen several of the movies and most of them are really entertaining. It's not surprising that people have used *Quake* as a source for creative outlet, but some of the things people have come up with are pretty amazing – as far as I know, most of the movie creation is done without any involvement from us. There may be some e-mail exchanges between the users and some of our programmers or level designers, but such contact would be inconsequential”

TODD HOLLENSHEAD, CEO OF *QUAKE* CREATORS ID SOFTWARE, GIVES *PC ZONE* HIS TAKE ON THE *QUAKE* MOVIE MAKING SCEN.

That, Des? panel top right). The demos ranged from dreary 30-second films showing players being massacred, to flashy, humorous promos. The latter is what caught the passing attention of Hugh Hancock. "I spotted the Ranger movies [the Rangers were the first to make a *Quake* movie] and watched them more or less when they appeared," he says. "However, if I said I immediately had a flash of genius as to what they could be used for, I'd be lying."

It wasn't until Hugh volunteered to help out on a proposed UK Movie Project that he was finally bitten by the movie-making bug. The UKMP eventually turned into Hugh's first film – *Eschaton: Darkening Twilight*, a story inspired by HP Lovecraft's Cthulhu mythos about a hero's quest to destroy the Great Old Ones.

Unlike other people involved in the scene who usually create short promos before embarking on a major project, such was Hugh's passion for the medium that he ended up with a crew of some 20 people – he brought in Alex Fedida who provided the movie's theme music; actors were used for the voice-overs; *Quake* 'skin' specialists such as Kevin 'Rorshach' Johnstone were asked to create the 'costumes'.

The film took five months to complete and has a final running time of 25 minutes (that's 15Mb of zipped files to download). While the production values and camerawork are somewhat rosy in places, the film met with rave

⊕ Hugh with just a few of the 20-strong crew of actors and technicians who help him put his *Quake* movies together.



RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

If you're interested in exploring into the *Quake* movie scene, here are a few good starting points

THE QUAKE MOVIE LIBRARY qmovies.frag.com/ A reasonable all-round site with brief details and downloads of the movies already out there, interviews with the star movie-makers, tips on editing, and profiles of the clans that pump out *Quake* movies on a regular basis. They recently held the first *Quake* movie Oscars – check out the site for a list of the winners.

JAGGED'S QUAKE MOVIE REVIEWS qmovies.vortxq.com/ An extensive database featuring reviews of all the films out at the moment. Jagged also scores each production for originality, camera work, mood and use of extras. If you want to save yourself time and money downloading movies, this is the best place to start.

PLANET QUAKE PlanetQuake.com/ An obsessively extensive guide to everything *Quake* – you'll find links, detailed reference guides (check out the Chop Shop for the technicalities involved in general *Quake* editing), advice and downloads aplenty aimed at beginners and experts alike. Fugging, superb.

RECOMMENDED SOFTWARE

Want to start making your own *Quake* movies? Here's how to get hold of the software mentioned in this article

DEMENTED 2 is the recommended package for editing *Quake 2*-based movies. You can download it from quake2.stomped.com/demented2/

FILM AT 11 is a Win95-based *Quake* demo editor. You can find source code at www.planetquake.com/filmat11/whatsnew.htm or www.mglca/~estern/filmat11.html

KEYGRIP is the recommended package for editing *Quake*-based movies and is available free from www.planetquake.com/keygrip

WORLDCRAFT can be found free at www.softseek.com/Games/Games_Cheats_and_Editors/D_9436_index.html

HASH 3D (ANIMATION MASTER) costs \$199 (£120). Check out their homepage for more details and ordering information – www.hash.com/

IMAGINE costs \$695 (£400). Order it direct from Impulse, the software's creators at www.coolfun.com/ or phone them in the US on 001 612 425 0557.

3D STUDIO costs £2,400 and can be ordered from www.photonic.co.uk or call them on 0161 973 8367

LIGHTWAVE 5.5 costs £1,640. Order it from AMG on 0171 468 3444

reviews from the on-line community.

Thunder, aka David Cunningham, maintainer of the *Quake* Movie Library, sums up the general attitude towards Hugh's debut: "I think *Eschaton* is a turning point in *Quake* movies – it has drawn us away from comedy and amateur sketches, to serious feature-length films with a developed plot. I have no doubt that where *Eschaton* has lead, others will follow."

Not bad for a first effort, eh Hugh? "It's in equal parts gratifying and slightly embarrassing," explains the movie-maker. "I'm very pleased at the way *Darkening Twilight* has gone down, but it is in a way slightly embarrassing to be feted on the basis of a film which had so many flaws... Overall, I'm happy that we've made such an impression, but irritated that *DT* wasn't anything like as good as it should have been."

And in the style of a true perfectionist, Hugh and company have launched themselves into the sequel – *Eschaton: Nightfall*, a 35-minute film using *Quake II* as the platform instead of its illustrious forefather. And there are another two sequels planned after that.

...IS ANOTHER MAN'S INSPIRATION

So what's the appeal? Hugh explains: "The *Quake* movie' style of animation is one of the biggest things to hit amateur filmmaking in the last 20 years, perhaps the biggest. Certainly the movies being produced with it are primitive now, but no more so than computer animation was in the '80s or filmmaking itself was in the late 1800s.

For the first time, amateur filmmakers can, within a

reasonable budget and time frame, produce animated features that can come close to rivalling professional animations," he argues. "If I was to go all out for hubris, I'd say *Quake* movies could be the thing that levelled the playing field between professional and amateur animators, if not filmmakers as a whole."

Strong views indeed and if you're still unconvinced by the seemingly ludicrous idea of *Quake*-created animated films one day giving the likes of *Toy Story* a run for its money, then check out the links in the Recommended Sites panel above and make up your own mind.

With the playing field levelled, though, can we expect to hear stories of Robert Rodriguez-style success brought about directly because of the *Quake* movie making scene – a young gun who is spotted because of his unique *Quake* work? "I've no idea," offers Hugh. "However, *Quake* has already ensured that plenty of other people have been given jobs in other fields, so it's by no means impossible."

So grab your *Quake*-cams, and remember – Hollywood's ripe for the taking. Allegedly. **PCZ**

HOW DO THEY DO THAT, DES?

Had your curiosity pricked and want to have a go yourself? *PC Zone* presents a beginner's guide to *Quake* movie-making.

To create a (very) basic *Quake* film, you need to record demos (like the one you see at the beginning of the game). To do this, load *Quake*, bring up the console and type in: record <name> <level>. The level then loads up and you're ready to roll.

If you're using actors, they need to be hooked up to the same session as well. Once they've taken their positions, you're ready to begin. Once they've played out their roles in the demo (or, in film-speak, the scene), simply go back to the console and type in: stop.

You can then load your recorded scenes into an editor such as the basic *Film At 11* or the superior *Keygrip*. These *Quake* editing packages roughly operate in the same way – each scene can be edited using a "blocks system" ie with *Film At 11*, each block shown

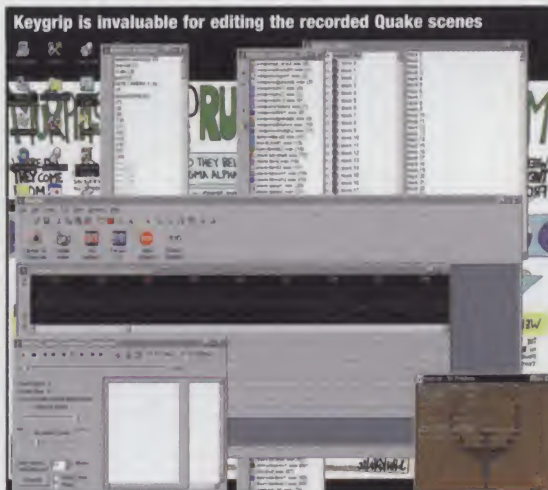
on screen represents one 20th of a second of a particular scene.

From there you can add, delete and generally tweak away until you're happy with the footage. If your film is going to consist of more than one scene, then these can be spliced together as well. Sound files can also be imported to make up the soundtrack to your epic by simply attaching a wav. file to a block in a particular scene.

Sound simple? Well, it is. Unless you're going to start creating your own characters, skins, fancy camerawork, animations, locations and maps. Hugh Hancock and his crew use 3D modelling packages to create the characters (give *Imagine* or *Hash 3D* a spin. Or, if you're loaded, *3D Studio* or *Lightwave*). For animations, you'll need to get to grips with C

coding. For skins creation, a decent art package is required, and to create maps, *Worldcraft* is highly rated. For quality dialogue recording, an investment in a good microphone and sound editing package is also vital. For his next production, Hugh will be using a professional sound stage, but we're sure your front room will do for your debut.

For more technical details, check out the Recommended Websites panel on the left. Special thanks to David Cunningham for sketching out the basics at his homepage – qmovies.frag.com/.



Keygrip is invaluable for editing the recorded *Quake* scenes



Intense concentration from all concerned as Hugh runs a couple of scenes past his 'Quake clan'.

Hugh lives in Scotland so he likes Irn Bru.



WHAT DO YOU NEED TO GO BRAINS?



ET BEHIND ENEMY LINES...
BRAWN?

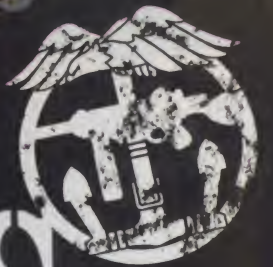
...OR BOTH?

COMMANDOS

BEHIND ENEMY LINES

THE ULTIMATE ASSIGNMENT FOR ACTION-HUNGRY STRATEGISTS
Visit the website for an interactive demo at www.eidosinteractive.com

PC
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EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

CAR



☹ The appropriately-named Max Damage looming malevolently over some vehicular carnage yesterday.

Clear the roads, it's...

MAGEDDON II: CARPOCALYPSE NOW

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Stainless Software

PUBLISHER SCI

WEBSITE www.sci.co.uk

OUT Last quarter of '98

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ New cars, opponents, courses and destruction effects
- ★ Enough extra gore to make the original look like *Herbie Goes Bananas*
- ★ Improved multi-player options
- ★ Possible mission-based levels

“Probably the most tasteless game of all time? I should hope it's the most tasteless game of all time, or else I'll be damned annoyed”

— PATRICK BUCKLAND, LEAD PROGRAMMER

It's a nightmare of ghoulish obscenity! It's *Carmageddon*, part two. And (gulp) it's *Charlie Brooker* at the wheel

You may think you're a valuable human being, with thoughts, emotions, ambitions and desires, but as far as that oncoming vehicle is concerned, you're just a big bag of blood. Hit hard enough, you'll burst like an offal balloon, transformed from a blinking, thinking being into a sickening whirlwind of spiralling innards and marrowbone shrapnel. Roads are heartless tarmac racetracks ruled by four-wheeled metal boxes driven by barely sentient sales reps whose rationale for speeding rests entirely on the fact that they haven't suffered a fatal head-on crash... yet.

And who can blame them, since they're scarcely aware they're driving at all? They've got one ear tuned to Rubbish FM, and the other plugged into a mobile phone, and both sides of the road are littered with eye-catching hoardings designed to make passing motorists stop thinking about driving and start thinking about buying a new kind of breakfast cereal instead. Step out in front of one of these motorised sleepwalkers and your sole contribution to our national heritage is likely to amount to little more than just another harrowing statistic in an eerie public information film.

Still, at least no-one's deliberately trying to mow you down (touch wood). When you think about it,

simply using a zebra crossing involves an incredible amount of trust on the part of the pedestrian. Would you feel safe walking in front of a man with a loaded gun? Of course not – yet a car could kill you just as easily. God be praised we're not living in the world of *Carmageddon*.

Carmageddon has made Stainless Software rich, an observation authenticated by the flash cars parked outside their increasingly cramped offices housed on the Isle of Wight. *Carmageddon* is a game in which you crash cars and run over pedestrians to score points. It's also incredibly gory. As anyone with a passing interest in gaming is aware, it ran into trouble with the BBFC (British Board of Film Censors), and was released in censored form. Fortunately for psychopaths everywhere, the BBFC's decision was subsequently overturned, and the game was restored to its full gory glory.

And they did it all for a laugh. According to lead artist Neil Barnden: “It was a case of thinking of all the



Max was one step nearer his goal of ridding the world of overweight schoolboys.



Welcome to the wonderful world of splinters.



“Get outta the way or go into orbit, sucker!”



Red's a good car colour – it's macho and it doesn't show the blood stains.

THIS IS HARD-CORE

Carma II soars to new heights of tasteless ghoulishness. Excellent!

If you thought pedestrians had a raw deal in the first game, you're in for a shock with the second installment. For the sequel, each 'ped' is constructed from around 70 polygons – these are proper, three-dimensional people. And since Stainless are no longer dealing with dumb sprites, they are free to bless their creations with more realistic behaviour patterns: the new improved peds can walk, swagger, trot or flee in a mad, arm-waving panic. Sometimes they even get down on their knees and beg for mercy. The naive fools.

Want more? Well, here's another leap forward for stomach-churning technology: detachable body parts. Strike a glancing blow and you can tear somebody's leg clean off. Or send both their arms bouncing across your bonnet. Or hurl them into a nearby lamp-post with enough force to decapitate them. A multiple pile-up in the centre of a crowded pavement often results in a swarm of bloodied limbs being tossed around like numbered balls in a lottery machine.

But wait, it gets better: the victims don't always die outright. Yep, sometimes the unfortunate peds will pick themselves up off the ground – missing limbs and all – and desperately start hopping away, their severed veins spewing goblets of blood from the freshly torn stumps, just like the Black Knight from *Monty Python And The Holy Grail*.

We wouldn't believe it if we hadn't seen it with our own eyes. It's a nightmare of ghoulish obscenity. And it's f**king hilarious.

APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION

A wrecking spree beyond your wildest nightmares awaits...



Thanks to *Carmageddon II*'s new damage algorithms, it's half the car it used to be.

Just about everything can be smashed to pieces in *Carmageddon II*. There's glass, for starters. It's everywhere – in the windscreens, the headlights, and on the front of most of the buildings. Remember the infamous shopping mall car chase from *The Blues Brothers*? Well, it's going to be a bit like that.

And don't forget the cars themselves. They really can be bashed to bits – and it all happens in an incredibly realistic way. You'll find yourself driving along with a wheel missing; or a dislocated bumper dragging along at your side (which is handy, incidentally, for scooping up extra pedestrians). Huge chunks of your car get ripped off with alarming regularity.

The cars also buckle and break. Hurtle into a brick wall and you stand a good chance of bending your car in half so the wheels can't touch the ground. You're going to have a heck of a laugh exploring the possibilities. Oh yes.

DEVCV



STAINLESS SOFTWARE

From the legendary *Crystal Quest* to the less-than-glorious *Broom*, we take a look at Stainless' history.

1987: Patrick Buckland writes legendary Macintosh action puzzler *Crystal Quest*, with assistance from artist Neil Barnden.

1995: Stainless Software formed. Their first production is a demonstration game called *Broom*, for Criterion's BRender technology. It ain't very interesting.

1997: *Carmageddon* released to general furore. *Splat Pack* follows several months later. *Carmageddon* wins PC Zone's Game Of The Year award, while Stainless themselves swan off with Developer Of The Year.

1998: Work on *Carmageddon II* continues apace, as does work on a secret fighting title which apparently "does for the beat 'em up what *Carmageddon* did for the driving genre".



➤ *Carmageddon II* boasts an expanded cast. Alongside old faves, there are a few new additions. One of them's a dead ringer for Mel B. Sadly, Christopher Lillcrap is nowhere to be seen.

← things you'd really like to do in a driving game – where you'd play something and think 'yeah, but if only you could do that then it would be fucking ace' – and then making it." They seem to laugh a lot at Stainless. Particularly when they're demonstrating *Carmageddon II* – *Carpocalypse Now*, their current work in progress. They laugh out loud, and they're not simply putting on a show for the benefit of PC Zone. They're laughing because *Carmageddon II* is almost unbearably funny.

CRAWLING FROM THE WRECKAGE

The talented development team behind *Carmageddon II* is headed by three main players. First there's Patrick Buckland, lead programmer, and the aforementioned Neil Barnden. For computer boffins,

they're an unlikely looking duo. Patrick sports a lengthy wizard's beard; if he put on enough weight he could pose as a malevolent Santa Claus. Neil is stocky and shaven-headed, observing proceedings with the faintly detached amusement of an Amsterdam coffee shop attendant. If they turned up together on your doorstep in the middle of a thunderstorm, you could be forgiven for anticipating an ugly incident

involving a claw hammer. Fortunately, the only atrocities they commit are restricted to the small screen.

Anyone whose education was enlivened by the occasional illicit laugh at an obscene doodle scrawled on the back of an exercise book would get on well with Patrick and Neil. Naughty schoolboy giggling abounds as the pair demonstrate their latest meisterwork. A recent change to the

code has enabled the team to start placing 'jointed' objects, such as articulated lorries, into the game. It sounds like a minor change, but it means that, for example, you can open the car door while driving, hence the current hilarity – Patrick weeps with laughter as he takes a pedestrian's arm off with a well-aimed swipe.

So, guys, how does it feel to be responsible for probably the most tasteless game of all time?

Patrick takes offence: "Probably the most? I should hope it's the most tasteless game of all time, or else I'll be damned annoyed."

Well, the first *Carmageddon* was exceptionally tasteless... how could this possibly be worse?

Neil points out the inclusion of extra animals, including elephants.



The cars are assembled from separate parts. You'll realise why after your first major crash.



Left to right: Mat Sullivan (development manager), Patrick Buckland (lead programmer), Neil 'Nobby' Barnden (lead artist), Ashley Hampton (intro artist), Darren Porter (2D artist), Bruce Mardle (engine programmer), David Hosier (programmer), Matt Edmonds (programmer), Alan Rowe (2D artist), Paul Marchant (3D artist), Richard Batty (car programmer), Kevin Martin (physics programmer), Russell Hughes (2D artist), Ian Moody (tools programmer).



Every car is given its own 'skin', just like a *Quake* marine. Lovely.



STAINLESS

A few questions for the folks behind Carmageddon

PCZ How does *Carmageddon II* measure up to its rivals — *Motorhead*, *Ultimate Race Pro*, etc?

NEIL How many dismembered body parts per square metre do these games boast? Not as many as ours.

PCZ Name something sicker than *Carmageddon II*.

RUSK Aqua getting three consecutive Number One singles.

PCZ Ever been in a fight?

NEIL I was at Rourke's Drift. And the Battle of River Plate. I won.

MAT I'm actually having a fight right now.

PCZ Name one non-violent piece of entertainment you actually enjoy.

PAUL Sensual love.

RUSK 'Herbal' ciggies on a hot summer's day.

PCZ If you could beat Richard 'Countdown' Whiteley to death with a heavy object, what would you choose?

NEIL One of our two PC Zone awards.

ASH My penis.

DAVE Vanessa.

ALAN His own leg.

PATRICK A '77 Dodge W200 pick-up truck.

RICHARD Jupiter.



⊕ A giant cow in a small car, a half-tank/half-VW bus, a combine harvester and a wingless Stuka dive-bomber are among the new vehicles.

"Elephants contain an enormous quantity of blood," he notes sagely.

Patrick goes even further. "We've redefined the boundaries of bad taste," he boasts. "We thought we were going to go to Hell the first time; this time we're going to Hell with a special apartment reserved halfway up Satan's bottom."

OBJECTS IN MIRROR ARE CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR

Looking on is big cheese number three, development manager Mat Sullivan, an ex-Bullfrog employee and bona fide games enthusiast. During our visit, he enthuses at length about a variety of PC titles and is eager to hear our opinions on recent releases. Aside from appreciating the games themselves, he clearly likes to keep an eye on the competition. So what

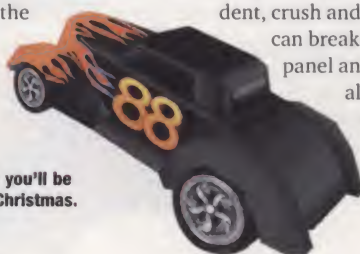
did he make of similarly anarchic car 'em up *Grand Theft Auto*?

"I didn't see what all the censorship fuss was about," he says. "It didn't make me want to go out and hurt anyone; well, not beyond the normal feelings of hatred I always have for the general public."

And what about the game itself? "The missions were fun. If there's time, we'll be having missions in *Carmageddon II*. Not because *GTA* did, but because it would enable us to add features at a slower pace, rather than revealing everything the game has to offer on the first level."

Missions, eh? Hmmm. So what else is new? Are

Just a few of the new vehicles you'll be pulling a Marc Bolan in come Christmas.



I HAVE THE POWER

Naturally, *Carmageddon II* is set to feature a bulging sackful of power-ups. All of your favourites from the first game — such as Gravity from Jupiter and the Hot Rod speed-up — plus a healthy smattering of new ones

PEDESTRIAN REPULSIFICATOR Excellent fun, this. Just hit a button to launch nearby peds into the air with a gigantic spring.

OPPONENT REPULSIFICATOR Same as above, only this sucker is capable of hurling entire cars around. Use the Opponent Repulsificator on an articulated lorry to create truly jaw-dropping destruction.

DRUNKEN/GROOVIN'/SUICIDAL/EXPLODING/ GIANT-HEADED/HELIUM-FILLED PEDESTRIANS

Drunken peds reel around; groovin' peds strut their stuff; suicidal peds run towards you; exploding peds create a massive bloodstain when hit; giant-headed peds have... well, giant heads, of course; and helium-filled peds are sent zooming skyward by the slightest nudge from your vehicle.

DISMEMBERFEST Makes peds act like lepers — in other words, it doesn't take much to bash their limbs off.

MINE-SHITTING/OIL SUCKS FROM YOUR ARSE Two self-explanatory examples of *Carma II*'s new 'offensive' power-ups.



The wonderful Pedestrian Repulsificator in action.



Taking the quick way down — no probs.

there loads more cars? Neil pipes up first: "Yeah, lots more hot rods and fast things with blades, plus a half-tank/half-VW bus, bubble cars, a combine harvester, a wrecking ball crane, assorted heavy plant stuff and a wingless Stuka dive-bomber. My personal favourite is the very small car driven by a giant cow." Neil then demonstrates said vehicle on-screen. It beggars belief.

"Another important point is that these cars are all designed in separate pieces," interjects Mat. "They can dent, crush and bend... we can break off any body panel and smash all the glass — all the

windcreens, windows, headlights and everything. You can knock out an engine, and in rare cases even tear the entire car in half."

Jesus! So, being car crash aficionados, do they enjoy watching those *Police*, *Camera*, *Action*-style 'rubberneck' TV programmes?

Neil grins: "The best was one I saw in the States recently. It was called *Surviving The Moment Of Impact II*."

PUTTING THE 'SICK' INTO 'PHYSICS'

One of the factors that made the original title such a joy to play was the attentive emulation of 'real world' physics. Not surprisingly, the technology behind it has been improved for the sequel. "More things can collide at once than in the first *Carmageddon*," explains Mat. "Everything's part of the 'world' and



We'd like to see *Police Camera Action's* Alastair Stewart commentate over the top of this.

TO BLEED OR NOT TO BLEED?

If the censors decide, in their infinite wisdom, to clamp down on *Carma II's* bloodfest, there's always Plan B, as Stainless reveal

The version of *Carmageddon II* we saw was the 'full-blooded', uncensored version. At the time of writing, no decision had been made regarding its UK release. Obviously, while SCI are keen to avoid another confrontation with the BBFC, they'd prefer to see the deep red 'director's cut' on the shelves. And so would we. Past examples from the world of cinema suggest that the BBFC is capable of seeing the joke when it comes to 'comedic' gore – witness the aforementioned *Brain Dead*, which escaped uncensored, or Paul Verhoeven's splatterific *Starship Troopers*, which was passed with a 15 certificate. Like those films, *Carmageddon II* sets out to amuse rather than appal. But just in case the game falls foul of the censors, Stainless can adopt Plan B, as Mat Sullivan explains.

"For the countries which censor games they see as violent, we're doing a version with cool-looking aliens or zombies instead of pedestrians. They'll behave exactly the same as the humans, but with different animations and green blood."

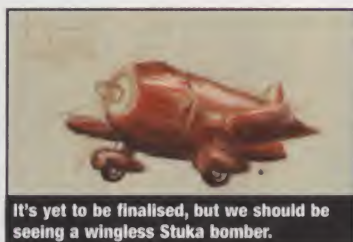
Nice, but not as funny. Fingers crossed for the full-on, gristle-packed incarnation.



Carmageddon II: a major contribution to road safety it is not.



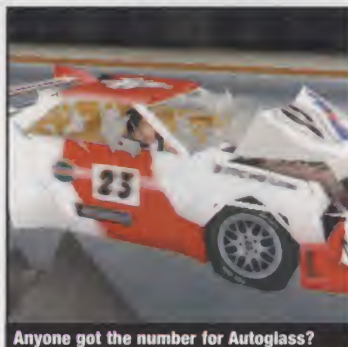
This development sketch reveals a healthy 2000AD influence.



It's yet to be finalised, but we should be seeing a wingless Stuka bomber.



Take off a door, or even rip the car in two.



Anyone got the number for Autoglass?



CRUELTY ZOO

A few baby seals may be seeing the underside of your tyres if Stainless get their way

Right now, Stainless are planning to include in the game a course which comes complete with its own zoo. Yes, you've guessed it. We're talking *Animal Magic* meets the Khmer Rouge. Elephants, penguins, giraffes... they're all going to die. If Stainless get their way, there might even be a bunch of baby seals staining your tyres.

This probably won't go down too well with the general public, however. And hey, we know what we're talking about on this one. But you've got to laugh, right?

can affect everything else. You could push a pedestrian in front of your car, then brake, and the pedestrian would carry on sliding; then, say, hit another pedestrian and smash them both through a glass window."

Which should cheer us all up. Speaking of pedestrians, there are a whole bunch of improvements here (see the section headed 'This is hard-core', page 58, for the grim details). But first let's ask about the multi-player options. The original *Carmageddon* deathmatch mode was a tad flawed in that department.

"The only real failing was that the environments were too large," claims Patrick. "If the players understood that, they'd make a point of sticking together and the game was great. Otherwise, they tended to get lost, and I can see how it could've been

frustrating. *Carma II's* going to have much tighter deathmatch arenas."

IN COLD BLOOD

So, they may be responsible for the goriest game in history, but are they at all squeamish? Patrick looks contemplative: "I love good splatter movies – *Bad Taste* and *Brain Dead* are some of the best pieces of cinema ever made. But I can't stand real blood – particularly my own, which belongs inside my body where I can't see it."

What about serial killers? Got any particular favourites? Patrick brightens up considerably: "Jeffrey Dahmer's my man! He had style: eating his victims, drilling into them while they were alive..."

Woah, horsey! Woah! Does the fact that you live on an island contribute to this nihilistic sense of humour? Is everyone on the Isle of Wight like this?

Patrick shrugs: "Well, there was a bit of witchcraft going on here a couple of years ago – people sacrificing goats and things."

"Yeah, but then we got bored with that so we set up a games company instead," adds Neil.

Those sharp, blood-stained blades sticking out of the front could be a bit dangerous.

Everybody in the room laughs out loud. But we wouldn't like to give odds on whether or not he was joking...

DEATH AWAITS

There's still a long way to go before *Carmageddon II* is ready for the nation's (dis)approval. At the time of our visit, the team was beavering away in an attempt to get a special preview version ready for the E3 show in Atlanta. But you'll be able to savour the game in its full, glass-smashing, limb-wrenching, vehicle-buckling, gore-sodden glory later this year when we bring you an exclusive demo. Last year, your votes secured *Carmageddon* our Game Of The Year award. On the evidence we've seen thus far, Stainless just might manage the double. [E]





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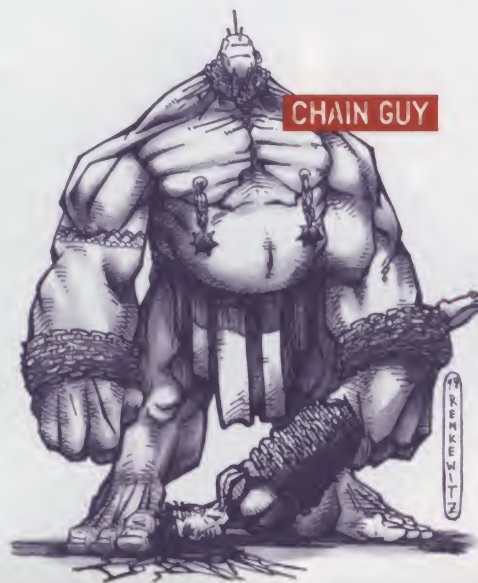


Dancing with the Devil in DIABLO 2

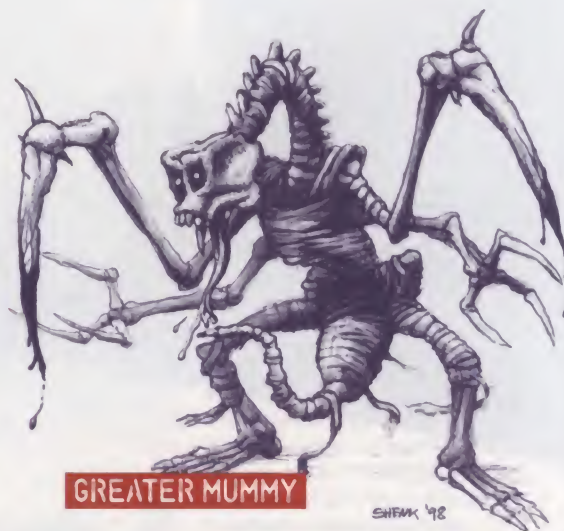


AMAZON

It's been over a year since *Diablo* was released, but now that *StarCraft* is finally out of the way Blizzard are taking us back to hell. Paul Presley tagged along for the ride



CHAIN GUY



GREATER MUMMY

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Blizzard Entertainment

PUBLISHER Cendant/CUC

OUT Winter '98

WEBSITE www.blizzard.com

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Four times bigger than *Diablo*
- Highly customisable characters
- Extensive on-line setup
- Vastly improved monster AI



Although still randomly generated, the dungeons will have 'themes' that run throughout each.

Bill Roper, one of the top men at Blizzard Entertainment, is an easily excitable man. Get him talking about his games - he's been responsible for ground-breaking titles such as *WarCraft II* (PCZ #36, 82%), *StarCraft* (PCZ #64, 88%) and, of course, *Diablo* (PCZ #48, 88%) - his company or his attitude towards programming and pretty soon his chair's rocking back and forth like a grandmother on speed as he flows excitedly from one point to the next. "After we released *Diablo* we were deluged with letters saying things like, 'Wow, I really loved that game. It was great. Now here are all the things you need to do to make it better.' We really try to pay attention to that."

It's no secret that role-playing games have taken something of a downward turn recently. The genre's flagship series, Origin's *Ultima* games, seemed to have stalled a few years previously and RPGs were suffering as a whole. *Diablo*'s good-looking isometric graphics, action-orientated 'hack and slash' gameplay and typical RPG storyline (lone hero battles powerful demon to save the world) appealed therefore not only to hardcore role-players desperate for a fix, but also to a more general gaming audience.

Given its success (and the capitalistic nature of the industry), it was inevitable that we'd see a sequel. However, Roper insists that the decision to follow up the original was

➡ Bill Roper, a man with few worries and fewer leftovers.

➡ Roper displays the kind of man-management skills that have got him to the top.



BILL ROPER

Blizzard's lead director answers the questions that really matter

PCZ Which was the first game you ever played?

BILL The old X's and O's *Star Trek* game at the Livermore Labs at Berkeley University.

PCZ Which is the best game you've ever played?

BILL *Ultima VII*. It had everything – story, combat, a world that would keep me enthralled for hours.

PCZ Which games are you playing at the moment?

BILL *Dark Omen*, *Myth*, *Final Fantasy VII*, *Triple Play 99* and *Bard's Tale*.

PCZ Which was the last game you paid money for?

BILL *The Ultimate RPG pack* (a collection of 12 'classic' RPGs).

PCZ Ever been in a fight? If so, why?

BILL On-line, in a dungeon in *Diablo* over treasure. In the real world it was in a bar over whose turn it was to use the dartboard.



ART ATTACKS

➡ Preliminary artwork always plays a large part of any game's development. *Diablo 2*'s artists have really gone to town with the designs of the game's creatures. In keeping with the expanded nature of the rest of the game, the restrictions of size aren't important, so expect to see some really offensive creatures lurking in the dark corners of your mind... er, the game.

“We want people to say: ‘I’ve never really played an RPG, but this is a good kind of crossover’”

– BILL ROPER, LEAD DIRECTOR, BLIZZARD SOFTWARE

not simply down to monetary reasons. “After *Diablo* shipped and the team took a few weeks off, we started looking at what their next project would be,” he says. *Diablo* was programmed by Blizzard North, one of the three separate programming teams at the company. “We had a few small technological ideas and internal development stuff, but they all just said, ‘Look, we’ve talked about it and... we wanna do *Diablo 2*.’ We totally understood that because we were the same when we did *WarCraft*. We kept saying, ‘We wanna do *WarCraft II*’ because there was a lot of cool stuff we didn’t get into *WarCraft I*.’ I really feel the same kind of leaps that were made from *War I* to *War II* are the same kind

of leaps that they’re making from *Diablo 1* to *Diablo 2*.”

LEAPS SUCH AS...

At first glance, *Diablo 2* looks more like *Diablo ‘Enhanced’* than a fully-blown sequel. Which is understandable from one point of view – if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it. The only trouble being that *Diablo* was broke, most notably on the multi-player side of things. The infamous ‘*Diablo* hack’ almost ruined a perfectly acceptable alternative to Origin’s *Ultima On-line*, the wood-chopping and sheep-farming simulation, by giving players the ability to alter their own statistics and equipment before they logged on. This time round Roper is adamant that having server-side information instead of storing everything on each player’s machine (the root cause of the hacking problem), the on-line environment will be a definite improvement.

“We’re going in a direction that gets rid of cheating, so we can have a

persistent economy,” he says. “We can prevent people from coming in and saying, ‘Hey, I just made a bunch of these really great Swords of Damocles in memory, so here, let me pass them out.’ We want to have things like incredibly rare items. Like if there were 250,000 people playing on Battle.net, there might only be five of that type of sword. You could go to a chat room on the Trading Post and say, ‘I’ve got a Sword of Damocles,’ and people would go, ‘Oh, I’ll give you anything for it!’”

Roper is hoping that by having items that are not only rare but usable only by certain types of characters and that can combine with other rare objects, the on-line *Diablo 2* world will take on a sort of organic nature. Quests will be initiated by players that have certain powerful items to trade for other, more useful, items. A wizard that finds – but can’t use – a Shield of Arcane Defence, might use it as a reward for a warrior that brings him a rare piece of magic.

“Suddenly, still within the structure



BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT

Behind Blizzard's bland facade, many games have been created, including...

1992 Released *The Lost Vikings* with Interplay

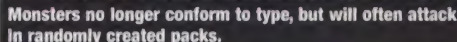
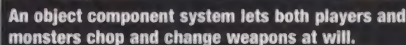
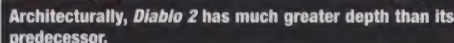
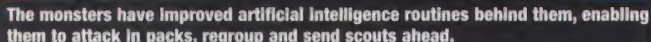
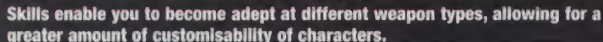
1993 Released *Rock ‘n’ Roll Racing* on the Sega Megadrive

1994 Signed with Ablac. Released *WarCraft: Orcs and Humans*

1997 Released *Diablo* and the Battle.net Internet gaming system

1998 Released *StarCraft* (eventually)

of how *Diablo 2* works, but outside of the actual game, there are these new quests that are being given to all these players in multi-player mode, outside of anything that we could have put into the product,” Roper explains. “You already see that in other games, with bounty hunting and player killing and



— **BILL ROPER, LEAD DIRECTOR,
BLIZZARD SOFTWARE**



All of which is well and good for Netheads, but it's the single-player market that makes up the majority of *Diablo 2's* potential audience. What's on offer for the non-wired fraternity? Quite a lot as it happens. First of all there's size. "We definitely wanted to make the world bigger. In the first game, even though you were battling to save the whole planet, it really felt like you were simply fighting Diablo

There are other changes too. Day and night cycles enable the game to have monsters that react differently depending on the time of day, and magical effects that only work at specific times. Plots can also be driven by time, with certain actions only taking place when the moon is out, for instance. Mostly though, the cosmetic changes are little more than tweaks:

Where *Diablo* is really changing is behind the scenes. Artificial intelligence routines for the monsters combine with the object component systems to allow for greater variety in the enemy you face. "It won't be like in *Diablo* where if you ran into a horde of Horror Captains they would all have a shield and a sword," says Roper. "Here you might run into a horde of skeletons and they would have swords and shields and maces and clubs and

At least that's the dream. The reality is that too few developers provide any real thought to the on-line side of their games. Fortunately Blizzard saw the potential of mass carnage with *Diablo* and produced *Battle.net* to accompany it. Offering worldwide ranking systems (for *Diablo* and *WarCraft II* and *StarCraft* players) and forums for you to exchange ideas, tips and arrange games, *Battle.net* has helped prolong the lives of games that would otherwise have been trampled on by the march of technological progress. Such is its popularity that it's fostered everything from lesbian-only *Diablo* guilds to underground Korean gaming movements. And, to top it all off, it's free. As all Net gaming should be.

Essentially *Diablo 2* is building on the success of the first game without changing to the extent that it becomes unrecognisable. Roper is keen not to create something that feels 'nichey', a game that only appeals to the anorak brigade: "We want people to say, 'Well I've never really played an RPG, but this is a good kind of crossover.' I don't think it will turn off as many hardcore role-playing gamers as it will benefit the genre and bring in a lot of people who have never played an RPG before. The whole industry is helped by that. The more gamers out there, the better for all of us." Hail, arch-mage Roper. You are indeed most wise. 



THE HUNT IS ON!

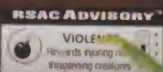
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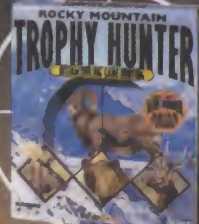


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Grave-robbing and garlic-chomping GABRIEL KNIGHT 3

The *Gabriel Knight* series takes on yet another new direction for its third outing. Paul Presley investigates the game that won't stand still

heads for France...

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Sierra
PUBLISHER Candant/Sierra
WEBSITE www.sierra.com
OUT autumn '98

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ A fully 3D environment with free camera control
- ★ Independent, real-time, free-roaming NPCs
- ★ A rich storyline based on real-world mysteries
- ★ No full motion video sequences

Cendant's Jane Jensen is an optimistic woman. It's no secret that the adventure game genre is dying, we've been saying that for ages in features and reviews. You've been saying so by voting with your pockets in favour of real-time strategy games or *Quake*-style action-fests. Even prominent developers within the adventure genre have been saying it, although not publicly and strictly off the record. Jane Jensen doesn't believe in giving up though, and if she has to reinvent the wheel to survive, that's what she's going to do.

"I think I became convinced when I went to CES last year and I walked around the show looking at all these titles that were the new big things, and not one screen had full-motion video. It was all 3D. I realised that if we wanted anyone to look at the game it had to be in 3D."

Jensen is talking about *Gabriel Knight III*, the third in her popular adventure series. Fans of the previous two games know full well about change. The first, released in 1993, was a then typical animated adventure with a very strong (and



Dark and mysterious... *Gabriel Knight III* returns.

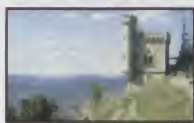
mature) story set in the world of voodoo folklore. The second, *The Beast Within*, changed tack completely, with a video-based environment and a tale of occultism, werewolves and German mythology.

"When we shipped *Beast* in 1995, everyone seemed really happy with it, and I certainly thought we'd be doing video again," she remembers. "The reason there wasn't a *Gabriel Knight* project for over a year after that was really that Sierra wasn't sure about what kind of technology they wanted to use. *Phantasmagoria*, *Beast* and *Phantasmagoria 2* all went considerably over budget – by far the worst was *Phantasmagoria 2* –

so Sierra just said no more video. Plus, by that time it was really falling out of favour with the industry."

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT 'EM...

Gabriel Knight III employs a brand new, custom-built engine that Sierra are hoping will take the adventure game genre to a new level. It's a fully immersive 3D world, somewhat akin to *Quake II* (but, thanks to Voodoo technology of the 3Dfx kind, with better textures). The difference is that you don't directly control a single character, but rather the camera. You are free to roam around at will, looking around desks, under tables, behind other characters, while issuing



① The real-life town of Rennes-le-Chateau: picturesque, full of mystery and in the middle of

France. Oh well, two out of three's not bad.

DEV CV



JANE JENSEN

What Jane Jensen has been up to

1991 Joined Sierra from Hewlett-Packard.
Worked on *Police Quest III*

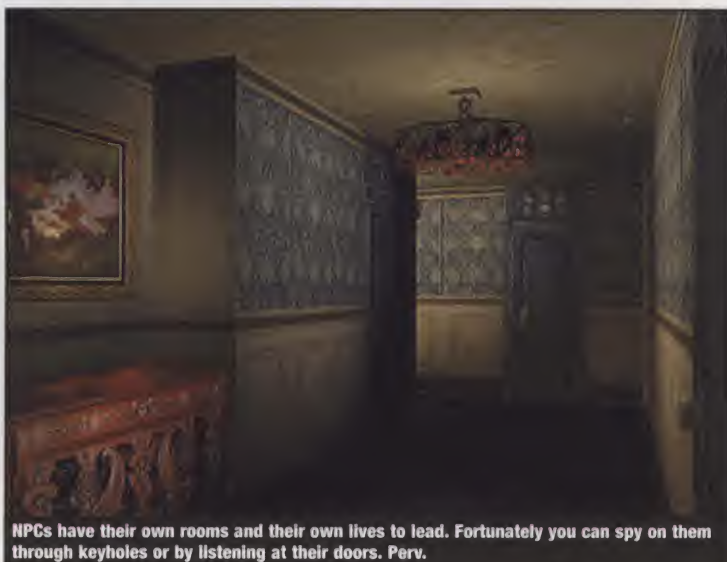
1993 Wrote and produced *Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers*

1994 Co-wrote *King's Quest VI*

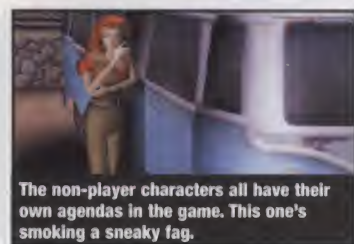
1995 Wrote and produced *Gabriel Knight II: The Beast Within*

1996 Spent a year writing an original novel (due for release next year)

1996 Wrote and produced *Gabriel Knight III: Blood of the Sacred, Blood of the Damned*



NPCs have their own rooms and their own lives to lead. Fortunately you can spy on them through keyholes or by listening at their doors. Perv.



The non-player characters all have their own agendas in the game. This one's smoking a sneaky fag.



The camera can be placed anywhere you like during dialogue scenes, or you can activate Cinematic mode and let the game work out the best angles for you.



❶ Conceptual artwork is used to provide mood and atmosphere for the designers of the main game graphics.



commands to either Gabe or his assistant Grace (depending on which chapter of the game you're currently playing). And in practice it works surprisingly well.

"This game is actually structured very differently to the other two," says Jensen. "When I saw the engine prototype, I felt that I was kind of like in this little dolls house and I had my Gabe doll and the other characters, and it was kind of cool. And I was thinking, 'What if you could cut away the world? What would all these people be doing?' So I thought it would be really cool if they could all have their own agendas."

Which is the other difference in the game. Unlike most adventures that have very static characters until you interact with them, *GKIII* has free-roaming, independent NPCs, all milling about to their own tunes regardless of your own actions.

Experiments in real-time adventure characters are nothing new, of course. The ground-breaking *Lure Of The Temptress*, for instance, had some superb examples, as did *Delphine's Cruise For A Corpse*. Most, however, produced mixed results. But Jensen has high hopes for her own characters. "During each of the game's time blocks, the other characters in the game will be moving around. So they'll be having lunch one time, then they'll sit in the lounge, then they'll be upstairs. You can listen at anybody's door or spy through keyholes to see if they're there, talking on the phone, writing or whatever. Some of these things are very complicated to script out because there's so much stuff that everybody's doing. And because they're all involved in the treasure

hunt, sometimes they'll be out at their locations in the valley, digging or whatever."

HERE LIES GOD. DIED PEACEFULLY IN HIS SLEEP

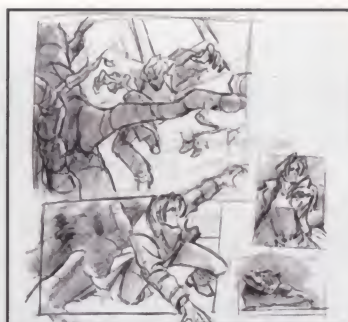
The treasure hunt in question is actually far deeper than it sounds. The game is based in the small (and very real) French village of Rennes-le-Chateau, home to one of the most intriguing mysteries ever known. It is rumoured that somewhere in the village lies the actual tomb of one Jesus of Nazareth. The area has been surrounded by mystery for centuries, and is linked with such secret societies as the Scottish Freemasons and perennial computer game favourites the Knights Templar.

The game's plot revolves around this religious mystery, but throws in all sorts of sub-plots to keep you guessing along the way. Supernatural events are plaguing a friend of Gabe, who is asked to help investigate. Shortly after arriving, the friend's son is kidnapped and Gabe and Grace are plunged into the Rennes-le-Chateau mystery proper.

"It takes me about five months to write a plot, and a lot of that is reading and getting ideas," says Jensen. "Because I'm working with so many different elements, I'll end up reading a book about Rennes-le-Chateau and it will say something about sacred blood and I'll immediately go, 'Ooh, vampires!'"

3D KILLED THE VIDEO STAR

But while the storyline may be a strong one, what about the actual game? Will traditionalists be put off by the all-3D approach? Jensen

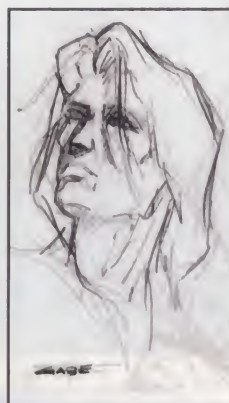


❶ There are animated sequences in the game where you have no control, and they've been well-storyboarded to make sure you don't get bored.

doesn't think so: "The traditional adventure games were animated; certainly *GK1* was animated and we still managed to tell a good story. And I think this engine is better than 2D animation or video. There are always trade-offs, sure, but *GKIII* is going to be a much funner game." **PCZ**



❶ The game's version of Rennes-le-Chateau has many interesting locations, all based on the real place.



❶ The characters go through many design stages, but the basic image of Gabe has remained constant throughout each game in the series.

Q&A

JANE JENSEN

The woman behind the Gabriel Knight series fields the questions

PCZ Which was the first game you ever played?

JANE Adventure on a mainframe; *King's Quest IV* and *Manhunter: San Francisco* on PC.

PCZ Which is the best game you've ever played?

JANE Among my all-time favorites are *Colonel's Bequest* and *Monkey Island*.

PCZ Which game are you playing at the moment?

JANE *GK3*! Over and over and over...

PCZ Which was the last game you paid money for?

JANE *Neverhood*.

PCZ Have you ever been in a fight? If so, when and why?

JANE In seventh grade I was in a fight with another girl over a snide insult she'd made.

SCOTS IN WORLD TAKEOVER BID

The Scots intend to rule the world come the year 2000. Better start learning the bagpipes

Jensen's research into the Rennes-le-Chateau mystery unearthed plenty of, er... interesting material. "What I think is interesting is that these groups, specifically the Scottish Freemasons who I had an opportunity to talk to, *really* believe all this," she says. "They have done for a very long time. Supposedly they have some plot revolving around the millennium where they want this stuff to become known. I think they're trying to claim a monarchy over the EU via a bloodline descendent of Christ, and all sorts of weird stuff. I think that's really fascinating. Now whether or not I believe it's true... Well I certainly wouldn't bet money on it. I take a kind of *X-Files* approach to my fiction. I just like to talk about stuff that's weird."

Incidentally, don't be put off by the fact that there are currently 666 Scottish Freemasonry lodges.

For further reading on the matter, we recommend: *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* by Michael Baigent (Dell Publishing Company, 1983) and *The Tomb Of God* by Richard Andrews and Paul Schellenberger (Little, Brown & Company, 1996). Yeah, that's right, we said *books*.



Freemasons. Yikes!



The highly detailed graphics bring out the splendour of every location, even if this room's decor doesn't.

It's Colin McRae. It's rallying. It's...

COLIN McRAE RALLY

Spinal Tap said it best:
 "Big bottom, big bottom.
 Talk about mudflaps,
 my girl's got 'em."
 Richie Shoemaker is
 the one with the
 child-bearing hips



THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Codemasters

PUBLISHER Codemasters

OUT July 17

WEBSITE www.codemasters.co.uk

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ New and innovative special effects
- ★ Endorsed and aided by the great man McRae himself
- ★ We're in need of a decent rally sim and we loved TOCA

As with those T-shirts that went purple if you had an embarrassing perspiration problem, you have to wonder which bright spark came up with the idea of mudflaps. We're talking here of those dangly rubber things that grace the backside of wheel arches, by the way. Put your mind to task, and the only possible benefit of having them is to stop water spraying the car behind. They don't protect the pedestrian - ask anyone who's taken a stroll after a heavy downpour, only to be targeted by an impotent motorist with a cartographic memory for roadside ponds.

Thankfully, in the sport of rallying, apart from a few masochistic roadside spectators, the cars definitely get their come-uppance. With vehicles caked in mud, it's each driver's aim to get around the course as quickly as possible without ploughing into a tree. For a car-hating pedestrian, apart from destruction derby, rally driving is a great one to watch. It also makes for a great game to play.

Rally games on the PC have been

uncommonly good, if a little thin on the ground. The best so far has to be *Screamer Rally* (PCZ #57, 91%), though for simulation fans, the top dog is the now ageing *Network Q RAC Rally* (PCZ #44, 94%), which was only mildly bettered graphically by the sequel, *International Rally Championship* (PCZ #56, 84%).

It's time, therefore, for a new contender to make itself known. Time to introduce *Colin McRae Rally* and the man behind it - Guy Wilday, producer at Codemasters, the guys also responsible for the excellent *TOCA Touring Car Championship* (PCZ #59, 86%).

DRIVING LICENCE

Right. So far, all we know is that *Colin McRae* is a rally game. Apart from driving through a number of undulating landscapes in various weather conditions, what else can we hope to see?

"*Colin McRae Rally* is the first rally game that truly represents the

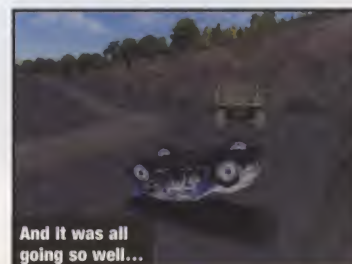
nature of the real-life sport," says Guy Wilday. "The key to the game's playability is the realistic handling, which uses real-life manufacturers' telemetry data to replicate real-life handling. There will be no comparison between *Colin McRae Rally* and any other racing game."

Fighting talk indeed. But how many people really know how a rally car actually handles? It would therefore appear to us that Codies are on pretty safe ground. From the off, it's pretty obvious that Codemasters see their rally game as the only rally game.

"Of course," says Guy. "In our opinion, the overall feel of driving a rally car has never - really never - been properly achieved by previous rally games. We've gone to extraordinary lengths to get the feel just right. That element - the feel - is the first thing anyone who plays the game comments on."

So, how do you get the 'feel' just right? Well, you simply enlist the help of the UK's top rally driver, that's how.

"Colin McRae and his co-driver Nicky Grist have been actively involved from the beginning right through to the final stages. Both Colin and Nicky's recommendations have been incorporated into the game.



And it was all going so well...

"There will be no comparison between *Colin McRae Rally* and any other racing game"

GUY WILDAY, PRODUCER, CODEMASTERS

**Q&A****GUY WILDAY**

Producer at Codemasters, the guys also responsible for TOCA

PCZ Which was the first game you ever played?

GUY The first game I ever played was *Brickout* on an old Apple II. It was my dad's computer but he didn't get to use it much!

PCZ Which is the best game you've ever played?

GUY Has to be *Mario64*. I'm still amazed at the amount of time and effort that must have been put into all the little touches. It's superb.

PCZ Which game are you playing at the moment?

GUY *1080 Snowboarding* [N64] takes my mind off the *McRae Rally* project.

PCZ Ever been in a fight? If so, why?

GUY Only with my wife regarding the amount of overtime I've been working.



The UK version includes actual co-driver messages delivered by Nicky Grist," Guy continues. "We've also looked to Colin for advice on how car set-up affects driving - it's a crucial part of the game. Each car has its own individual performance and handling characteristics that can be tweaked before you start a stage. For example, selecting the correct tyres for the conditions is crucial, and the wrong selection could prove critical."

FEARSOME ENGINE

All this grease monkey stuff might make *Colin McRae Rally* sound like a heavy-going, full-on simulation, but this didn't seem to be the case in the early version we played. True enough, there should be enough to keep simulation fans happy. But for the all-important arcade vote, there are loads of goodies to keep the *Screamer* fan occupied. For instance, by the end of any given race, your car will probably not only have lost its tail lights, but will also look like it's been driven through a hedge backwards - which, in all honesty, it probably would have been.

"We've put a lot of time and effort into getting the special effects to look just right," says Guy. "When you drive on mud, the wheels will kick up

sludge which will stick to the car. Similar effects are produced when you drive on snowy or dusty tracks."

Another welcome feature of the gameplay is the amount of freedom drivers have. No longer are you limited to the narrow confines of the road and bounced back to the centre should you stray onto the grass, as you were in *IRC*. What's more, there are numerous hidden short-cuts through trees and ditches that can seriously affect your steering. It's still not *Carmageddon* by any means, but by tweaking the TOCA engine Codemasters have seamlessly mixed elements of both simulation and arcade.

"*Colin McRae Rally* is based on the second-generation development of the TOCA game engine," Guy chips in. "Major enhancements include a more complex car physics model to realistically replicate rally car handling. The cars are laser-scanned to within 0.025mm accuracy against the real model. Once this data is



captured we reduce the meshes down to 450 polygons for texture mapping and inclusion in the game. Also, we currently have the game running on Voodoo 2 and it looks very impressive. We intend to include software support for 200MHz machines and above. But the game looks its very best with a 3D card, of course."

BLOOD, SWEAT AND GEARS

Finally, we asked Guy what he would say to those people who might think *Colin McRae Rally* is just another driving game.

"Play it, experience it, compare it," he responds. "We've sweated blood over this game. To date there have been 30 man-years spent on the development. We're incredibly proud of what we've achieved."

From what we've been privy to so far, Codemasters certainly have good reason to be puffy-chested. As it stands at the moment, the game looks visually impressive, especially with all the effects switched on. The way in which the cars handle is also pretty impressive, and the cars seem to powerslide and fishtail their way around the track just as you'd expect them to. Just don't ask us if it's realistic - none of us can drive. **PCZ**

Ⓢ (From far left to right) Going through the bales in the fog-cloaked English countryside • Ups and downs in the Australian outback • The end of the icy Swedish course is in sight • A rare chance to build up speed in England • The dust flies in Oz - time for a car wash • Trains, planes and automobiles • The student protests may have abated in the capitol, but in deepest Indonesia the driving is just as dangerous.

THE GUV'NOR

Colin McRae? Who he? we hear you ask. Read on...

Unless you're, like, *really* into rallying, you probably know nothing of Colin McRae. Just for the record, he's the youngest ever World Rally Champion and was only denied the 1997 championship due to some unlucky technical problems. He also bears a striking resemblance to Bodie from *The Professionals* and has a problem avoiding boxes in the road. Strange, that.



Shedding light on... THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT



THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Looking Glass Technologies

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive

OUT September/October '98

WEBSITE www.lglass.com

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Promising AI
- New graphics engine
- It's by the guys who did *Underworld*, for Christ's sake

Having done time (in his bedroom) for stealing sherbet lemons, a reformed *Richie Shoemaker* goes back to an age when he would have lost his hands for a lot less

Stealing: it's not big and it's not clever. *Thief: The Dark Project*, on the other hand, is. When a couple of years ago we first heard that Looking Glass Technologies were working on a new first-person fantasy game, we all became very excited, almost to the point of tears. The reason for this excitement isn't very difficult to source when you look at the company's pedigree: *Ultima Underworld II*, *System Shock*, *Flight Unlimited*.

With this range of hit titles under their belt, you could be forgiven for

thinking Looking Glass might just move on to something new – like a war game or something. They started off with a couple of flight sims, hit the big time with the two RPGs, moved on to an adventure, and completed a couple of sports games along the way. Luckily, they've gone back to what they do best (we think so, anyway).

UNDERWORLD I LOVE YOU

"*Thief* is a first-person, 3D action adventure," says Greg LoPiccolo, project director on *Thief* and creative director at Looking Glass Technologies. "Stealth and subterfuge are your primary tactics. In order to survive and prevail, you must outwit your foes, not just outshoot them."

Asked whether *Thief* was an RPG or a first-person shoot 'em up, Greg plumps for the middle ground: "It's a unique composite of genres first pioneered by Looking Glass with the release of *System Shock*. You do much more than just shoot everything that moves. In *Thief*, we've created a 3D world that is rich and detailed enough so that you can interact with it in many different ways: you can manipulate your inventory, observe and react to NPCs (non-player characters), fight with ranged weapons or hand-to-hand, and improvise your approach to situations with the tools at hand. We've taken the features of shooters and RPGs that we find most interesting, and abandoned the aspects of both genres that we find clichéd and boring."

Compared to the likes of *Hexen II*, *Ultima Underworld II* or *Lands Of Lore II*, where then can we expect *Thief* to stand in the grand scheme of things?

DEV CV



LOOKING GLASS

Before the *Underworld* games, Looking Glass were more involved with flight sims (remember Chuck Yeager's *Advanced Flight Trainer*?). Now, five years after their ground-breaking classic, they've got a lot to look back on – and, hopefully, a lot more still to come.

1993 Released *Ultima: Underworld*

1993 Followed with *Ultima: Underworld II* (PCZ #1, 94%)

1993 Released *John Madden Football '93*

1995 Completed *Flight Unlimited*

1995 Released *System Shock*

1996 *Terra Nova: Strike Force Centauri* (PCZ #39, 90%) came out

1997 *British Open Championship Golf* (PCZ #56, 82%)

1997 *Flight Unlimited II* (PCZ #60, 84%)

1998 *Thief: The Dark Project*



Hey, it's an alley. Who else do you expect to bump into?



"Fancy a spot of croquet, old chap?"



The *Dark* engine will allow more enemies on screen than you could possibly handle.



So they're the sort of people who hang out down the docks.



Even without the aid of a 3D card it looks good – if you've got a meaty machine.



"Design-wise, *Thief* is the spiritual heir to the *Underworld* games," Greg reckons. "We're trying to provide the same richness and sense of immersion, but augmented by the experience we've gained over the years and the greater capabilities of current hardware. *Thief* is not a traditional RPG. A lot of the conventions of such games arise from their paper game ancestors, and aren't really the best things to attempt in a computer game."

BORN SLIPPY

In *Thief* you play Garret, a brigand for hire. The 20 or so missions will take you through the dark sewers, streets and parapets of a medieval city. Using the shadows as armour, you get to slit throats, scale walls and listen in on your enemies as you hunt them down. More than just a medieval *Quake* clone, *Thief* will require a dexterous mind as well as a swift hand. Your foes will co-ordinate their attacks and work together to track you down. In many respects, it's got more in common with the smash N64 hit *GoldenEye* than *Quake*, and that must be a good thing.

"The artificial intelligence of the characters means that they sense the player, using sight and hearing, and broadcast their state by way of speech and gestures," explains Greg. "You don't talk to them much – you're a thief, and not much interested in idle conversation. But you can eavesdrop on them and gain valuable information about their strengths, weaknesses and intentions."

With *Thief* being mission-based and fairly linear, do Looking Glass anticipate it appealing to fans of the life-draining *Underworld* games?

"We believe that the most successful aspects of those games was that they didn't pre-ordain players' experiences, but empowered players to create their own unique experiences," says Greg. "Creating an open-ended but still focused game experience allows much greater suspension of disbelief than production values alone can ever provide. This is what we tried very hard to accomplish with *Underworld*



and are still trying to accomplish. Our guess is that players who found those games compelling will be knocked out by *Thief*."

DARK & LONG

Announced as early as 1996, *Thief* has been a long time coming. So what caused the delay?

Greg says: "*Thief* is the first game we're developing with the *Dark* engine, a ground-up new game engine specifically engineered to create games with the depth and detail that we're known for. We've put a huge amount of effort into making the *Dark* engine powerful, flexible and reusable, so that we can concentrate on designing games for a while, not just creating new technology. It's taken a while to get the engine where we want it, but we think that when you see what it's capable of, you won't regret the wait."

The most interesting part of the *Dark* engine is the Act/React™ system. If it's important enough to register as a trademark, then it must be pretty cool.

"Act/React allows us to abstract various causes and effects, which then allows us to simulate relatively complex, realistic behaviour without having to hard-code countless specific interactions. For example, a chair can be defined as 'wood', and the engine will automatically know that. Because it's 'wood', it will burn when exposed to fire, and float in water. Having these sort of open-ended interactions possible in the game engine allows us

to experiment with a variety of different behaviour and scenarios, to a degree that wasn't possible when we had to hard-code everything."

With their new engine running, Looking Glass could well be back on the gaming map. All they have to do is add a few new ideas and tweak the engine, and voilà: *Underworld III* – with knobs on.

"We're not saying what's next. Right now we're pretty focused on getting *Thief* done," remarks Greg. To which we reply: well get a bloody move on! **PCZ**



NIGHTMONSTIES

☞ Every city has its fair share of monstrous characters. As every elderly person in London will testify, the capital is rampant with whores and muggers. "People were so much nicer in olden times," they crow. Not so. Well, not in *Thief*, anyway. Back in the Dark Ages that never were, a lot less wholesome creatures roamed the dim alleys. You'll find humans aplenty. Turn the wrong corner, however, and any one of a number of freakish abominations could spring up and throttle you. Be afraid.



GREG LOPICCOLO

The project director on *Thief* and creative director at Looking Glass Technologies takes the stand

PCZ What was the first game you ever played?

GREG The first game I got addicted to was *Road Rash* on the Sega Genesis, back when I was an impoverished rock musician with nothing better to do all day.

PCZ What is the best game you've ever played?

GREG I don't really know. The game I got most into was multi-player *WarCraft 2*, which I played to death for about a year.

PCZ What game are you playing at the moment?

GREG *Total Annihilation*.

PCZ What was the last game you paid money for?

GREG *Total Annihilation*.

PCZ Ever been in a fight? If so, why?

GREG Not recently. In tenth grade, some kid poured ketchup on my jacket at a football game, so I was honour-bound to give him a good punching – which I succeeded in doing, somewhat to my surprise. A crowd gathered. It was very dramatic.

Home and Internet PCs

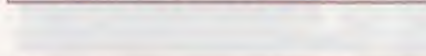


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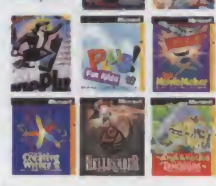


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THE GAME WE'VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR?



WESTWOOD'S BRETT SPERRY RESPONDS

When Westwood released screenshots of their sequel to *Command & Conquer: Red Alert* in March earlier this year, the *PC Zone* chat forum was buzzing with feedback, and not all of it was positive. In response to some of the concerns and criticisms raised, we went direct to Westwood and asked them to defend themselves

Two months ago we invited you to comment on *Tiberian Sun*, one of the most keenly awaited games of this year. The feedback we received was mixed, and many of you appeared quite concerned. Were Westwood doing enough to compete with the myriad of other real-time strategy games set for release later this year? Would the sequel to the awesome *Command & Conquer* live up to the massive expectations? And, more importantly, would *Tiberian Sun* be just another halfway house in the same way that *Red Alert* was essentially C&C in high res? Would a few new units and coloured lighting really be enough to compete with the likes of *Total Annihilation II*, *War Of The Worlds* and *Wargames*?

So why had Westwood seemingly gone against the grain and decided against complete 3D, shied away from naval units and opted to use voxels over polygons? In short, what were they doing with our beloved C&C?

In an **exclusive** interview with *PC Zone*, Westwood's Brett Sperry, executive producer on *Tiberian Sun*, responds to many of the issues raised and explains why he reckons *Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun* will blow the opposition away come Christmas.

PCZ Many people enjoyed the naval battles of the last game and argued that it brought an extra dimension to the genre. Why, then, have you decided not to include any naval units in *Tiberian Sun*?

BRETT In every C&C game, we like to introduce several new strategies and units never seen in previous C&C games. We will not include every unit from our previous games in the new ones, because it would work against our story as well as the clarity of each side. Where is the clarity if we plug 50 or 75 or 100 units into the game? How long will it take to learn those units effectively so you will not feel cheated when an opposing player beats you through deeper study and memorisation skills, instead of a fair fight where all the rules and units are easily knowable and memorable to everyone? Once you

introduce large numbers of units and game elements, the means of differentiating them becomes harder and harder, and the differences between them become too subtle. I believe there is a fine line and art to all of this, and if you are not careful with your design, the very essence of what makes a great strategy game exciting and addictive starts to leak away. Our aim is to create a completely different mind-set and philosophy behind each side. This is what makes a C&C game truly dynamic and full of strategies and counter-strategies. There is also our story, the setting and back story which determines how Nod and GDI have evolved, and the tactics (and hence units) they believe will help them win.

PCZ *Total Annihilation* is considered by many to be technically more advanced than C&C because it uses polygons rather than sprites. Why have you decided to use voxels [3D sprites] instead of polygons?

BRETT Two main reasons: gameplay and aesthetics. In a game like *TS*, where it's possible and very common for lots of units to be on the map at once, speed and responsiveness are important. Once one of our voxel objects is rendered into RAM, it's really no worse than blitting a bitmap/sprite to the screen from a performance standpoint. Polygons must be constantly recalculated every time they move. That's a lot of CPU usage, and given all the atmosphere, kinetics, lighting and shrapnel we want to have flying around during intense battles, we had to create a more advanced visual system that didn't require everyone to have the latest and fastest CPU and/or 3D render card.

As for the aesthetic, it helps that our voxels don't really care what shape they take. We can make very ornate and smooth units with sloping curves and lots of detail. Given the fact that we want the player to see a good portion of the battle map through the viewport, polygon units wouldn't be large enough to reveal all the visual fidelity and, most importantly, reactivity we wanted. There are no true 3D polygon RTS games like C&C out there yet, but I am sure one or two are in the works. It will be interesting to see which trade-offs they choose, and how playable they will be on, say, a P5 133 with a standard 3D graphics card.

PCZ Games like *Myth* and *Dark Omen* and the forthcoming *Force Commander* from LucasArts use an advanced 3D rotational game engine. Why have you decided to opt for the more traditional 2D isometric viewpoint?

BRETT The battlefield and units are 3D, they're just not polygonal. We wanted to create a dynamic terrain system where the terrain is alterable in real time. A polygonal terrain



Check out these new Nod Cyborg units. Cool.

"I love the strategic dynamic between all the units, and I really love the kinetic battlefield"

BRETT SPERRY, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, TIBERIAN SUN

engine, where the terrain isn't pre-calculated, isn't very performance-friendly when we factor in all the things a C&C game wants to do. The fact that C&C TS has dynamic terrain, coloured lights, numerous special effects and 3D units, all while not requiring a 3D card, is something of a technological feat. But more importantly, we want to make C&C TS accessible on many different CPUs. If you have the latest machine with AGP or MMX support, you will notice a dramatic increase in performance. But making things like a P6 300 with 128Mb RAM, or 3D accelerator cards, or AGP a requirement would probably cheat many gamers out there of the C&C TS experience.

PCZ Outline the key features of *Tiberian Sun* and explain how they've evolved.

BRETT We have an interactive and kinetic battlefield with 3D terrain. We wanted to make the battlefield more interesting, exciting, reactive and dangerous. For example, players will have to account for lakes and rivers that freeze, forest fires, winds that can carry poisonous gas, and ion storms that will cripple hi-tech weapons.

Weapons and units gain experience points, which leads to improved armour, speed, power and special abilities. This brings greater value to every unit and will encourage and reward those players who take care of these units.

“We had to create a more advanced visual system that didn't require everyone to have the latest and fastest CPU and/or 3D render card”

BRETT SPERRY, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, TIBERIAN SUN

You can play solo against up to seven AIs in Skirmish mode, connect with up to eight people on a LAN, or four players over the Internet. Westwood Online will also feature automatic ladder rankings and support the new C&C Battle Clans.

PCZ There are scores of C&C clones out there. What are you doing to ensure that *Tiberian Sun* will kick the opposition into touch?

BRETT We've seen the influence *Dune 2* and C&C have had on other designs and it is intriguing, but we aren't really focused on what others are doing. The original C&C plan was to tell an epic story and game experience over four installments, and build upon the foundation and essence of what we believe makes RTS games so compelling to play. C&C TS continues in the original spirit and will offer lots of new surprises and quite a few fresh ideas. Personally, I think the point behind RTS games is not adding ever more stuff, or lots of different stuff for difference's sake, or all the latest techno/visual/fashionable gimmicks, but to deliver solid and exciting strategy gaming with a reasonable number of new twists/units/controls etc. Good, solid games take only what they really need and maintain several levels of balance and playability.

PCZ *Red Alert* is still one of the best multi-player games on the PC. How will the multi-player game change in *Tiberian Sun*?

BRETT We've added a number of new elements to the multi-player aspect of *Tiberian Sun*, including a random map generator, new in-game surprises like atmospheric effects that change the direction of the battle, some new 'dials' offering a greater degree of customisation besides starting number of units, credits etc, as well as automatic ladder rankings and Battle Clan support. And there are no additional or hourly fees for Internet players on Westwood Online, since we continue to run it as a free service worldwide.



This rendered cut-scene won't show you what the Nod cycles will look like in the game, but look good anyway.



Gorgeous rendered cut-scenes once again grace the C&C experience.



Tiberian Sun has coloured lighting, and it's not afraid to use it.

Night missions are a first for the C&C series.



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The versatile GDI hover unit can travel over water and land, which may go some way to explaining the lack of naval units.



The new Nod laser turret is even more powerful than its predecessor, the awesome Obelisk.



Suitably over-the-top explosions are of course all present and correct in *Tiberian Sun*.

Q&A

BRETT SPERRY

And now a few questions for our records...

PCZ What was the last game you bought?

BRETT *Resident Evil 2* for PlayStation and *Quake II* for PC.

PCZ What was the first game you ever bought?

BRETT *Wizardry I* for Apple II?

No, there were a few before that. Hmm... it's hard to remember, since I was playing a lot of games early on. The very earliest game would have to be a coin-op arcade game. *Space War*, *Asteroids* and *Space Invaders* all had their moments with me, and we all competed for the highest scores and most wins. I was a really big *Missile Command* fan back then, and I was able to play it for hours on a single coin. That was my favourite video game.

PCZ What games have impressed you lately?

BRETT I really liked the look of the *Forsaken* PC demo. I'm not sure about gameplay yet. *GoldenEye* N64 had good atmosphere, very Bond-ish, and the targeting of body parts was great fun. Best Bond game yet. I enjoyed the atmosphere in *Resident Evil 2* PSX. *Quake II* was fun, especially across our LAN, but I kept getting ganged up on and killed for some reason, no matter how good I got! I really enjoyed the live multi-player dynamic of *Ultima Online* for a few weeks, but the bugs and server problems short-circuited my interest.

PCZ Have you ever been in a fight? If so, tell us what it was about.

BRETT Sean Brennan, MD of Virgin Interactive UK. We fight constantly. Fists, chairs, insults, you name it! No, no real fights I can recall, besides picking on my little brother – but after he came at me with a cutlery set, the thrill was gone. I do remember actually being chased by a bull once when I was 11 while taking a short-cut on the way to grade school. Does that count?



PCZ How will the 'experience' system work?

BRETT It's a point-based system that takes into account which unit killed which unit or structure. For instance, a tank killing an infantry unit doesn't get much reward, but an infantry unit killing a tank gets a lot of points. As units and troops gather experience they will gain strength, speed, and in some cases new abilities.

PCZ Sounds cool. Other real-time strategy games, such as *Total Annihilation*, use line-of-sight to up the strategy and realism stakes. Why have you chosen to ignore it?

BRETT We've seen it used in a few games and, to be honest, I don't think it's fun. It creates unnecessary babysitting for the player, and can actually be frustrating because it often doesn't work consistently or quite the way you think it should.

PCZ Will there be any dogs, like last time?

BRETT *Tiberian Sun* has a few creatures that are new to the biosphere, and one or two are a bit more challenging than the old hounds from *Red Alert*.

PCZ Will *Red Alert*'s Tanya be making a re-appearance?

BRETT Not Tanya in particular, but in her spirit we have a very strong female character that's just (if not more) kick-butt than Tanya.


PCZ What did you think of *Total Annihilation*?

BRETT It's an interesting variation on the RTS theme. They took some interesting risks that I would not have tried and it was fun to play. I found the re-playability a bit thin, though.

PCZ Do you think that you've become victims of your own success – ie everyone has such massive expectations?

BRETT Expectations are probably high, but that's okay since I think we will deliver a compelling game and a lasting experience with a lot of replay value. Those who are hoping we will include every single idea/unit/feature they have ever seen in RTS games might be initially disappointed, but once they get into the game they will see the wisdom of it and hopefully be gratified by our selectivity. Hey, what fun would life be if you could have everything you ever wanted all at once?

AND SO WE WAIT...

From what we've seen and heard so far, it's pretty clear that Westwood know they've got a lot to prove. The fact that they've decided not to take advantage of 3D support and shunned polygons in favour of their own voxel technology for the sake of speed is both worrying and at the same time admirable. At present they're aiming for a minimum specification of a P133 with a standard graphics card in order to appeal to as wide an audience as possible. In doing so, however, maybe they're setting their sights too low. LucasArts for one have decided to go the opposite route and have stated that their new RTS game *Force Commander* will be 3D accelerator only – but then it uses a revolutionary 'bells and whistles' 3D engine and looks the mutt's nuts. So who'll come out on top? C&C is a massively popular game and no real-time strategy fan can afford to not get excited about *Tiberian Sun* – it will inevitably be one of the most hyped releases of the year. Until we get our hands on some playable alpha code however, we'll reserve judgement. 

➔ *Tiberian Sun* is due for release in October and is published by Virgin Interactive.

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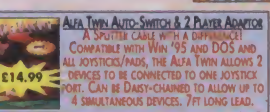
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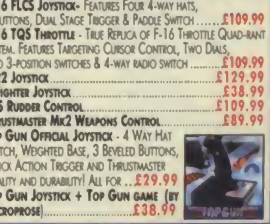
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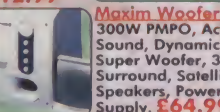
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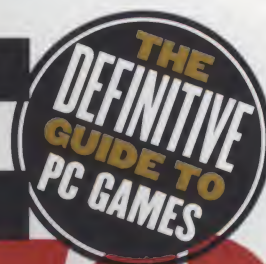
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PC ZONE REVIEWS



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WHERE TO CALL

Having trouble finding any of the games listed in the reviews section of the magazine? Here are the numbers you need to call

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BMG Interactive 0171 973 0011
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LiveMedia 01865 247714
MicroProse 01454 893893
Microsoft 0345 002000
Mindscape 01444 246333
NovaLogic 0171 405 1777
Sierra 0118 920 9100
Take 2 Interactive 01753 854444
Virgin 0171 368 2255

REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST

We at Zone pride ourselves on telling you exactly what we think. Our writers are the most experienced and talented reviewers in the business. They're all experts in their chosen genres and they won't pull their punches – if a game's not worth buying, we'll tell you why. But we don't leave it there. We also want to know what you think of the games that come out, which is why we've got our Feedback section on page 162. This is where you get the opportunity to get your points of view into *PC Zone*. If you've got a comment to make, then we want to hear it.

All our games are reviewed on a P133 with 16Mb RAM and a 3Dfx card. As well as a score, each review carries all the minimum spec information you need, and the reviewer's own comments about the technical specs.

THE SCORING SYSTEM

**PCZONE
CLASSIC**

90-100% Here at Zone we score every game out of 100. If a game receives a score of 90 or above, it is immediately awarded *PC ZONE* Classic status. Games that fall into this category are original, innovative, compelling, and are definitely worth buying even if you're not a fan of the genre.

**PCZONE
RECOMMENDED**

80-89% If a game scores 80-89% it is awarded *PC ZONE* Recommended status. Games that fall into this category are excellent examples of their type, and if you're a fan of the genre they're well worth buying.

70-79% Games that score 70-79% don't win any awards, but are well worth a look and are above average. If you're not a fan of the genre though, they will probably offer limited long-term appeal.

40-49% Games that score 40-69% are below average, and you should only really consider parting with your cash if you're a big fan of the series or genre, or you see it at a reduced price.

**PCZONE
PANTS**

0-40% Games that score below 40% are best avoided. They offer little in the way of long-term appeal, can be frustrating and definitely aren't much fun. If a game is seriously bugged it will also fall into this category. You've been warned.

THE HALL OF SHAME

These are the games that we still haven't been sent for review. This means that either they're completely crap and the publishers are scared we'll pan them, or their PR machine isn't quite up to full speed. But you can be sure that we'll buy them as soon as they're released and we'll tell you exactly what we think

BUST A MOVE 2 (Acclaim)
LULA & THE SEXY EMPIRE
(Take 2 Interactive)
POWERBOAT RACING (Interplay)
PREMIER MANAGER 98
(Gremlin Interactive)
RISEING LANDS
(Ocean/Infogrammes)
STREETS OF SIMCITY
(Maxis/EA)
TANARUS (Sony)
THE MEANING OF LIFE
(Take 2 Interactive)
UBIK (Cryo)
WRECKIN' CREW (Codemasters)



A battle from the intro sequence, which of course bears no visual resemblance to the in-game combat sequences whatsoever.

SHIP WITH A VIEW

Just like all the other space combat games, *Interceptor* offers several completely useless viewpoints from which to check out the action



❶ Oooh, I wonder what I'll see if I look over the side of my ship. Just as I thought – nothing.



❷ Maybe I'll have a look over my shoulder – there must be something there. Nope. Oh well...



❸ Think I'll check out the external view and see... Hang on a minute, that's me!



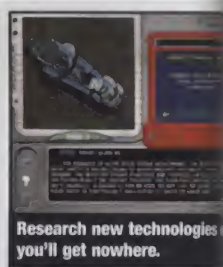
At the end of each mission, your ships jump into hyperspace – providing they're still in one piece.



Upgrade your base with defence weapons, new carpets etc.



Base defence is important to your continued survival.



Research new technologies if you'll get nowhere.

The full-screen view looks particularly nice, and it's the best view to fight from too.



X-COM: INTERCEPTOR

★ £34.99 • MicroProse • Out now

X-COM meets *X-Wing* in Earth's latest confrontation with the aliens. Could this really be the best of both worlds? Sort of, says **Chris Anderson**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb **SUPPORTS** Direct3D-compatible accelerator card, network play, Internet play **WE SAY** You need a P166 with a Direct3D accelerator card and 32Mb RAM (we tried with 16Mb RAM and it wouldn't load)

**PCZONE
RECOMMENDED**



What a prospect: an all-action space combat sim tagged on to the traditional *X-COM* resource management and research engine. With this concept in mind, the creators of *Interceptor* have set out to capture the hearts of strategy and action fans alike. For this they must surely be commended.

But, being the evil rotters that we are, we shall set *Interceptor* the highest of all challenges for this review. We shall put the resource management and research side of *Interceptor* up against *X-COM: Apocalypse*, the most recent (and best) episode in the *X-COM* saga, which sports a technically impressive and highly addictive resource management and research model. The space combat portion of *Interceptor* we shall judge against (sharp intake of breath) *Privateer 2: The Darkening*, which we reckon to be the greatest space combat game of all time. Thus begins our three-way mini-shoot-out: *Interceptor* versus a formidable doubles team of *Privateer 2* and *X-COM: Apocalypse*. May the best team win. Or something.

ROUND 1

Research has always played a major role in the *X-COM* series, and *Interceptor* proves no exception to the rule. At the beginning of the game, your ships will have weak laser weapons and unreliable missile systems. This is not such a problem early in the game as the battles are fairly easy to win. But as the game progresses and your opponents

get better (and increase in number), you'll need advanced weapons to keep ahead of the game. This means research, and the good news is you'll find this a lot less complicated in *Interceptor* than you may have done in *Apocalypse*. There is no longer any need to recruit large numbers of scientists and build living quarters for the extra personnel (all the time keeping an eye on the skill level of the individual scientists). Researching in *Interceptor* is a simple case of building data downlink modules at your bases and choosing which subject to research at each base. Up to three downlink modules can be installed at each base (the more modules you have, the faster your research is carried out), and you'd be well advised to build a couple of bases as soon as you can afford it, simply for research purposes, or your research will be carried out at a snail's pace.

There's still just as much stuff to research in *Interceptor* as there was in *Apocalypse*, but it's a far less painful and laborious exercise. Some of you may appreciate this, which is why we're going to give *Interceptor* the benefit of the doubt over *Apocalypse* for the research and management side of the game. Round 1 to *Interceptor*.

ROUND 2

Very difficult one to judge, this. MicroProse have taken a bit of a gamble by losing the tactical combat section of the game (which largely contributed to the success of the series in the first place) and replacing it with a space combat sim. We've got to be honest here and say that, visually at least, the combat section of *Interceptor* is not going to win any friends. It's



ALIEN INVASION

Nothing much happens in *X-COM* until you speed up the time controls and wait for trouble. And sure enough, trouble's exactly what you'll get



1 Aliens have been spotted not too far from your home base. You could ignore this message, but a better idea is to check the situation out.



2 Choose which ships you want to send to their doom. You can only have up to five, while the aliens can have as many as they want. Is this fair?



3 Your mission briefing screen confirms your worst fears: we've got five ships, they've got nine. But hey, we're not afraid. Much.



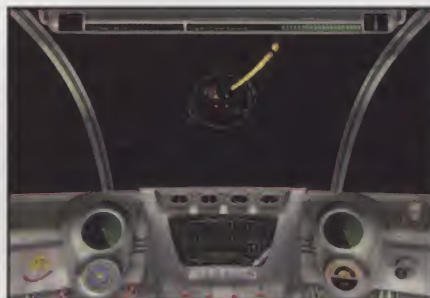
4 The boys fly bravely/stupidly (delete as applicable) into battle against all the odds. The fun's really about to start.



5 The battle's begun. There's an alien out there, he's a muton. There's a missile out there, with the muton's name on it. Which means...



6 ...see ya later, alligator. It's best not to chuck missiles at the aliens, as you don't get too many of them. Take your time, line them up and...



7 ...there goes another one. Repeat to fade and just hope you don't lose too many X-COM pilots in the process.



8 The show's over. Mission debriefing tells you how many alien ships you've taken out and how many valuable materials you've recovered for research.

ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS

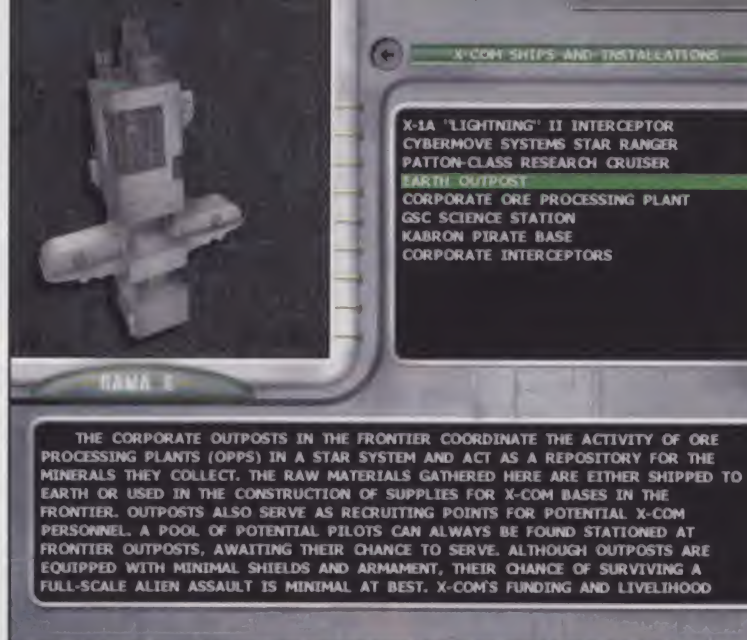
You've got pilots, you've got scientists, you've got a database. Use them properly and everything will fall into place

Newcomers to the *X-COM* experience may find the whole thing a bit daunting at first. But it's not as complex as it sounds, honest. Think of yourself as a government agent who's been asked to save the world from an alien threat and given lots of money to achieve those goals. You've got pilots at your disposal to counter the alien threat in the air. You've got scientists to research advanced weapons for your ships. You've got a database at hand to tell you everything you ever wanted to know about the alien threat.

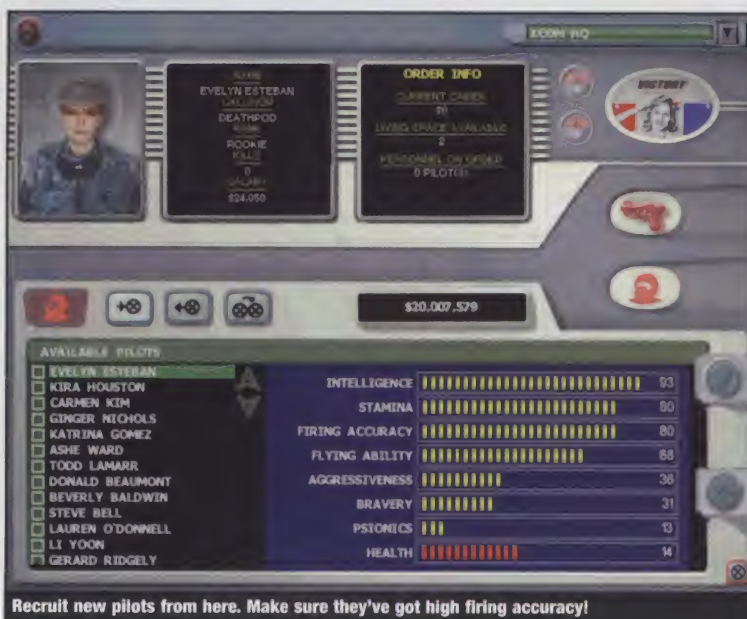
In common with all the *X-COM* games, you'll find that the more you learn about the game universe, the more you'll want to learn about everything in the game. If you're not particularly good at space shoot 'em ups, and find yourself overwhelmed in battle, go and hide – the rest of your team will most likely do your job for you (especially at beginner level). As long as you spend plenty of time (and money) on researching new technologies, the rest of the game will fall in to place and you can learn its intricacies at your own pace.

MULTI-PLAY

Two to eight players can play head-to-head over a network with ships they've customised with the weapons from the game. Two players can play head-to-head over the Internet. However, you can only play the space combat part of the game, but if this is what you're after then you're better off with *X-Wing Versus Tie Fighter*, which is a superior game.



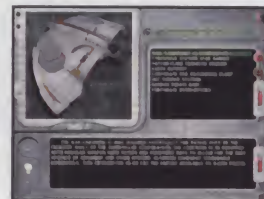
Outposts play an important part in the game. They supply most of your ships, technologies and funding, and you're often called to defend them from pirates and other ne'er-do-wells.



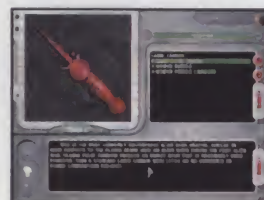
Recruit new pilots from here. Make sure they've got high firing accuracy!

UFO INFO

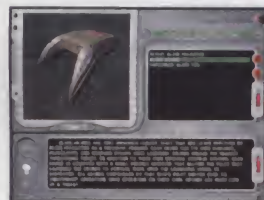
The Ufopedia from the previous games has thankfully been retained. Use this neat little book to...



Check out X-COM ships and installations.



Keep track of the weapons at your disposal and upgrade your ships accordingly.



Keep up to date on alien technology. You might get to use it yourself, y'know (hint, hint).

← certainly no match for the drop-dead gorgeous graphics in *The Darkening*. Even with 3D acceleration enabled, *Interceptor's* graphics look flat and unconvincing, the dark unwelcome void of open space coming across as, er, a flat black thing with white dots on it. The actual combat isn't particularly exciting either, lacking the intensity of *The Darkening* or *X-Wing*, and displaying a distinct lack of imagination in the way the missions have been designed (defend outposts, attack stray aliens, base-defence etc).

It's difficult to identify with your soldiers, too. In the first three *X-COM* games, you really concentrated hard on keeping your soldiers alive so they could gain experience and perform better in the next battle, and felt a real sense of loss when one of your favourite units kicked the bucket. In *Interceptor*, the soldiers do get better with experience, but

you get the feeling it's all going on in the background. When one of them dies, the normal reaction tends to be 'sod it, I'll get another one', thus taking away the feeling of kinship with units you've kept alive for some time. On the plus side, there's a genuine feeling of excitement when you've researched a particularly neat piece of kit and know you're going to be using it in the next battle. Bigger and better lasers and missiles are the order of the day, and getting hold of these in *Interceptor* is a much more satisfying experience than in *The Darkening* because of all the work you've done to get them. Oh, and the explosions are nice. Round 2 goes to *The Darkening*, then, by quite a long shot.

ROUND 3

The most important round of all, in which we assess *Interceptor's* merits as an all-round gaming experience against those of

Apocalypse and *The Darkening*. In fairness, *Interceptor's* developers have handled the transition of the *X-COM* universe from fully-fledged strategy to action-strategy hybrid competently and with much attention to detail. There's much more to do in *Interceptor* than in *The Darkening*, and the switch to space combat will make a refreshing change for those who have played the previous games in the series. Admittedly, *Interceptor* is slightly flawed as an action game, and hardened *X-Wing* and *Wing Commander* aficionados will scoff at the simplicity of it all, but as an all-round experience, the feeling you're living in a real universe with composite parts that all complement each other is still as strong as it's ever been.

The ultimate test of any game has to be whether or not the reviewer goes back to the game after the review. I'll hold up my

hand and admit that I won't stop playing *Interceptor* until I've finished it – however long it takes – and I can't give it a stronger recommendation than that.

Who wins the shoot-out? I've changed my mind about all that. I mean, it's not really fair to pitch two games against one, is it? **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

↑ **UPPERS** It's *X-COM* • It has the same addictive qualities as previous games in the series • It's a unique mixture of genres

↓ **DOWNERS** The combat section can't touch games like *The Darkening* or *X-Wing* in terms of playability or graphics • It's debatable how many people will find both genres featured in the game equally to their taste

87 Highly addictive, despite flaws in the combat section

ALSO CONSIDER

IMPERIUM GALACTICA GT (GT, £34.99) Similar to *Interceptor* in that it switches from strategy to action. **PCZ 53, 90%**

X-COM: APOCALYPSE (MicroProse, £44.99) Serious strategy fans who haven't played *Apocalypse* are advised to check this out before buying *Interceptor*. **PCZ 52, 95%**

PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING (EA, £39.99) The best space combat sim around – with no exceptions. Action fans, look here first. **PCZ 44, 94%**





POLICE REPORT

Accident Report / RTA-1156

Date: 30th September 1997

Time: 08.45 hrs

Injuries: None

Driver's Statement:

"The car I normally drive in V-Rally doesn't behave like that when you throw it into a corner at 96mph. I'd have missed the trees easy. I really would".

GMP/RTA/R11-675

12 official World Rally cars

60 challenging tracks

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Co-pilot voiceover


3 Modes - championship, arcade and time trial

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Multiplayer option allows up to

4 players head-to-head via

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Official PlayStation Magazine 9/10 

PlayStation Plus 94%

**PC
CD
ROM**

ocean



V-RALLY
MULTIPLAYER CHAMPIONSHIP EDITION



Couple of plasters and a quick dab of Germolene and you'll be right as rain.



Oooh, pretty. Oh, sorry mate. Did I just kill you?

ALSO CONSIDER

QUAKE II (Activision, £34.99) The first-person shooter to end all first-person shooters. Maybe not as pretty as *Unreal*, but a tad more solid. If you see what we mean.

PCZ #59, SCORE 97%

JEDI KNIGHT: MYSTERIES OF THE SITH (LucasArts, £19.99) Excellent mission pack for the already superb *Star Wars*-themed kill 'em up. Pit Darth against Luke in Deathmatch! Brandish a lightsaber! Etc!

PCZ #62, SCORE 95%

HEXEN II (Activision, £39.95) We called it *Quake in Tights*. We weren't wrong. If you prefer a little Tolkeinesque ambience with your first-person carnage, this is the game for you.

PCZ #54, SCORE 94%

UNREAL

★ £39.99 • GT Interactive • Out July '98

It's good-looking. It's *Unreal*. Unlike our own Charlie Brooker, who's weird-looking and unpleasant. Let's see how the two of them get on, shall we?

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** Direct 3D compatible accelerator cards and dedicated 3Dfx, Voodoo2, PowerVR and PowerVR2 support, Win95-compatible soundcards, IPX, modem, Internet **WE SAY** PII 200+, 3D card, 64Mb RAM, LAN, big speakers and a darkened room highly recommended

PCZONE CLASSIC

Walk into any arcade and you'll see row upon row of cabinets dutifully chugging away in attract mode – the show of enticing whiz-bang highlights the system defaults to whenever it gets hungry for coinage. It usually cheats a little – spooling video sequences with visuals infinitely more advanced than those available in-game, or showing staged set-pieces from exciting angles, which look way cool but would be impossible to play in. They try their damndest to make the game appear slightly *better* than it is, and often they succeed.

It's hard to imagine an equivalent attract mode for *Unreal*. The whole thing is one massive, continuous enticement in itself. It's arguably the best-looking PC game to date. It's also a damn good play. Now read on.

YOU'RE A PURDY BWOY, AINTCHA?

It's the graphics you notice first. The lighting effects are exceptional, with more stroboscopic, lens-flaring luminescence than you'd have ever thought possible. If Pink Floyd, Jean Michel Jarre and the Orb got together to host a concert, the accompanying lightshow wouldn't be a patch on *Unreal*. There are glowing lanterns, eye-piercing neon strips, dazzling explosions... It's just awesome. The volumetric fogging effect – which ensures that light is sometimes refracted as if through a shield of misty gauze – has to be seen to be believed. The reflective surfaces that *really* reflect will take your breath away.

Actually, there's probably a little too much poncy lighting on show here. After a few hours, your retinas start yearning for a vista of grey, featureless concrete to gawp at, if only to spare them the effort of straining to see past the dazzle. Live in Coventry? You're in luck. Keep the window open. Try not to hurl yourself out.

The textures, too, are brilliantly designed, complementing the expertly realised architecture. No complaints about 'sameness' here, either. *Unreal* features plenty of architectural variety: from ominous industrial interiors to medieval stonework; from lush greenery to the snaking corridors of a futureworld starship. The sense of 'being there' is hugely impressive.

The levels themselves can't be faulted. Not only are they impressive in scale – some areas are flabbergastingly immense – they also link together with fluid precision. Developers Epic have pulled off a coup: progression from one level to the next feels remarkably natural, as if you just wandered right in. Which brings us to our next point: atmosphere.

I LOVE A PARTY WITH A HAPPY ATMOSPHERE

Atmosphere is where *Unreal* beats other contenders outright. The storyline unfolds as you play, and for once it feels like part of the action, rather than a cursory plotline tacked on for the sake of anally retentive sci-fi fans. At the start of the game, you come to a cell on a prison ship. The craft is in the process of crashing, and everybody on board seems to be dead. As you wander around the place, searching for weaponry and some kind of first aid, a trail of gruesome mutilated corpses gradually leads you towards the surface of the unknown planet below.

It's genuinely creepy, with one of the best opening gambits in

HEY, TAKE A WALK

In the first of an occasional series of celebrity gaming walkthroughs, here's legendary gangster-midget Joe Pesci*, leading you through the atmospheric, scene-setting *Unreal* opening...

(*Not really)



1 Waddafog? Where am I? Prison ship, huh? And what's dis? I got 12% health? The game opens and I'm already half-fogged! Whad am I, a prig or sumpin'?



2 Where da foggin fog is everyone? This place is fallin' apart. Someone call my goddam agent. I'm gonna k//l dat foggin no-good palooka.



3 Me, Joe Pesci, crawlin' around in a foggin air vent, like some foggin warehouse rat or sumpin. Jeezus. Nice mist effect dough. Hey! Like I give a fog.



4 Now what? Still no one around. Hello?! Where are ya, ya foggin asswipes? Come heah! Hmmm... nuddin' doin'. Better look around for a piece...



A warm welcome to the most beautiful game of the year.

HOTSHOT BOT SHOCK

Them damn bots – they never miss!



With a name like Deathmatch, what the hell did you expect?

You don't need friends in order to have a crack at the *Unreal* Deathmatch – just fire up a BotMatch instead. This version of multi-player mode, in which your PC controls each opponent, is an excellent means of honing your skills. The one drawback is that the *Unreal* bots are almost too good. We sent David McCandless – our resident *Quake II* champion – in to 'kick some bot butt'... and at the end of the match he limped back, sobbing like a child. His conclusion? "They never miss. And they react to your shots the moment you fire, which seems a little unfair. But yeah, I'm impressed."

As well he might be. Up against a legion of bots, he came bottom of the league. And he's the best Deathmatch in the building. Another step along the road toward a *Terminator*-style future where mankind is crushed by a superior race of computers? Yup.



Can you look at these screenshots and *not* want to play this game? No.



5 Now dat's more foggin like it. Time to get tooled up and go whack some foggin guy. I'll blow dare foggin heads off. Hehehe. Foggin fog.



6 Hehehe. Look at dis prig. Someone's whacked dis foggin guy. He's all over da foggin place. Ya foggin lunk! Hey, whad's dat foggin noise? Gulp...



7 Whads dis? Da foggin infirmary heah? Hey, at least I got me some foggin health packs. Now, if I just follow dat foggin noise, maybe I can find a gun...



8 Whaddafog? I can hear all kinds of crazy stuff goin' on behind dis foggin door. Dare's some guy screaming in dare. Hey, you lunks! Open up!



9 Holy foggin moley, it's foggin carnage in heah! Arms and legs flyin' about! And who's dat guy runnin' away? Looks like a foggin monster or sumpin.

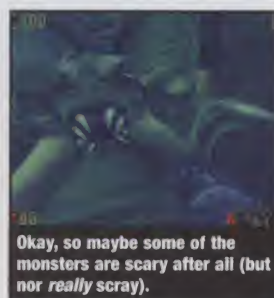




A scene from the "rather different" new series of classic Ralph McTell vehicle *Tickle on the Tum*.



Go on, punk. I dare you to leak in the pool.



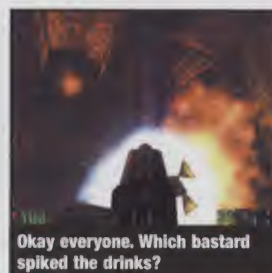
Okay, so maybe some of the monsters are scary after all (but not really scary).



Now there's an idea for a custom level: *Where's That Bastard Titchmarsh Hiding?*



Don't wave at me. I'll have your head off.



Okay everyone. Which bastard spiked the drinks?



Check out the reflective floor surface... then gun him down in cold blood.



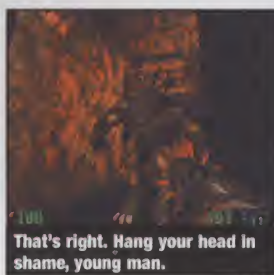
"And tonight on BBC1 – meaningless alien squiggles. For seven bloody hours."



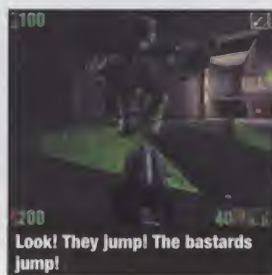
"Cos it's like *da*'...The 1998 *Unreal* hip-hop tournament in full swing.



Look. Even the mosquitos don't like you. You're worse than vermin. Kill yourself.



That's right. Hang your head in shame, young man.



Look! They jump! The bastards jump!



10 Hey! A foggin gun! At last! Now I'm gonna chase dat guy I just saw. I'll whack his ass good. Area C? Area C my foggin prig. Gedouddaheah.



11 Oh, a switch on da foggin wall, eh? Break da glass, huh? I'll foggin *kill* dat foggin guy. Foggin switch my ass.



12 Hey, dat's opened a foggin escape hatch in da foggin floor. If I jump down I can get outta dis foggin ship... But what da fog's underneath?



13 Oof... Oh, righ, anudda foggin tunnel. Jeez. Guess I'd better just follow dis here trail of foggin blood... Dis is just like the old days back in Vegas.



14 Whad da FOG?! Where da fog am I? We've crashed on some crazy foggin planet? Who the... What? Where? Foggin which? Dis is, like, foggin *unreal*!



Another day, another splintered spinal column.

WHO'S THE DADDY NOW?

Will *Unreal* knock *Quake II* off the deathfest throne?

Once we'd finished going "Oooh", "Ahh" and "Who spiked my tea?" in response to *Unreal*'s lush visuals, we turned our attention to the multi-player mode. Could *Unreal* be the game to wrestle *Quake II* from its current Number One slot as the after-hours deathfest of choice?

No. For the meantime at least, *Q2* is still king. A quick poll in the office revealed why. The biggest stumbling block is the disappointing *Unreal* arsenal: everyone agreed there's nothing to rival the close-up ferocity of a Super Shotgun, or the intense satisfaction of a long-range Railgun kill. Other points of concern included the way damage seems under-represented until it's too late, and the overall 'feel' of the thing ("You don't ever feel quite as in control as in *Quake II*," says art hotshot/*Quake* addict Tim).

Further options, such as spooky torches-in-the-night DarkMatch mode, are fine, but to topple the big *Q2* a game needs to offer something show-stoppingly original and fiendishly addictive. Sadly, *Unreal* doesn't.

Still, at least Epic will ship *Unreal* with all the Deathmatch levels intact from the start. Unlike ID, who let us all down with their scrappy patch-upon-patch routine earlier in the year. So there.



It's raining men. Hallelujah.



recent memory. The magnificent sound effects help matters no end – provided you turn off the dire music, that is.

IF THEY MOVE, KILL 'EM

Now, then. The enemy. *Unreal*'s monster squad is disappointing. None of them are truly unsettling in the way that, say, *Doom*'s flesh-gnawing demon was. Sure, you'll jump out of your seat on occasion, but that's because they've just leapt from a dark corner, not because they look particularly fearsome.

Put simply, the *Unreal* menagerie just doesn't inspire terror. The creatures are sleek and well-animated, but they look more like people in rubber suits from a 1980s sci-fi epic than authentic alien butchers. Which brings us to problem two: they're also too similar. Most are vaguely humanoid in appearance, and the majority of the time they're bathed in coloured light, so in the heat of the moment it's often hard to tell one from another. A few stand out, but overall they're a bit lacklustre. Shame.

NOBODY LIKES A SMART ARSE

Still, at least they ain't stupid. Monsters roll away from your shots, duck for cover behind nearby objects, circle-strafe, and scurry away screaming like girls when their survival prospects look grim. Wiping one out can take an absolute age – assuming you live long enough. Not only are they damn good shots, they're also adept at sneaky stunts like momentarily playing dead. There's no messing around when it comes to tracking you down, either. They're not averse to taking the long route round an obstacle if it's likely to catch you off-guard.

The oddest thing about this superior AI is how annoying it can be. For example, when you're

running low on ammo (that is, during every second of the game), it's unbearably frustrating to watch your enemy tumble out of the firing line, especially since their reaction times can be cruelly unfair – they often respond within milliseconds of a round leaving your chamber. Still, it's intensely satisfying when you finally nail one, because you've usually developed a deep loathing of the creature concerned by then. In this respect, it's a bit like hunting estate agents. Which is something we implore you *not* to do in real life. Oh, and don't burgle their houses and crap on their carpets either. No, really. Don't. That would be illegal.

By the way, many of *Unreal*'s weapons look and feel disappointingly *effete*. We defy you to enjoy using the Bio Rifle, for instance. Still, it's not all grumbles: the provision of two modes of use for every weapon livens things up considerably.

Okay, we'll say it again: no, it isn't better than *Quake II*. Deathmatch lets it down. In single-player, however, it's perhaps the slickest, most engrossing piece of entertainment you'll encounter this year. *Unreal* may not be stunningly original, but it is enthralling, exciting... and huge. Don't miss it. **PCZ**

EXTENDED PLAY



Tweak to your heart's content

Shrewdly, Epic are bundling an intuitive comprehensive level editor with every copy of *Unreal*. Using a *3D Studio*-style interface, you can construct an immense playing area of your very own. Everything is tweakable, from the textures on the wall, to the kind of ambient hum generated by the light fittings. Expect a slew of home-brew *Unreal* levels to clog up the Internet within weeks of the official release. Over the coming months, we'll show you how to design and build your *own* masterpiece. Note to other developers: follow Epic's lead, please.

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS** Engrossing atmosphere • Incredible graphics • Great level design • Unfolding storyline • Own level editor
- DOWNERS** Weedy weapons and monsters • A bit too flash at times • Needs a high-spec machine • Deathmatch doesn't quite cut it

93 Ahh, Epic, wiz zis game, you are really spoiling us



15 Hey, dis is more like it – anudda piece already. Dat looks like a foggin Uzi to me. Guess dis dead prig won't be needin' it. Wonder what foggin whacked him!



16 Hey, you dare! Mister foggin winged wonder! You wanna piece o' me? Huh, wise guy? C'mere! I'll foggin whack your... Huh? He's flown away. Now how about dat!



17 Guess I'll foggin explore dis foggin corridor. Seems deserted... Wait a foggin moment... Is dat a foggin guy bein' brown through da foggin air? What da fog's doin' dat?



18 Whaddafog! Who you?! I'll foggin... Take some o' dis, you foggin ass! Mudda! C'mere, ya foggin prig monkey fog knucklehead palooka! Fog!



19 Oh, and your foggin pal wants some too, huh? Firin' foggin missiles, huh? Fuggin asses! I'll crack your foggin heads! FOGGG! (dies screaming in pool of own blood...).



QUAKE II: THE REC

★ £19.99 • Activision • Out now

Six months after its triumphant release, *Quake II*'s first add-on pack is here. **ÜberQuakeMeister: David McCandless**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb **SUPPORTS** Windows-compatible sound card, most 3D accelerator cards, Network play **WE SAY** Pentium 166 or better, 32Mb RAM recommended, 3Dfx graphics accelerator card

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

One thing to tell your pale little grandchildren about *Quake II* in years to come is its open architecture. The way it enabled anyone with a bit of suss to change it, to add new levels, new monsters, new graphics and all that. A lot of people have had a go at doing it. Some turned out good. Most turned out crap – as *Doctor Who* to *Babylon 5*, you could say, if you were a sci-fi special FX buff.

The authorised commercial variants, however, have thus far been very excellent indeed. *The Reckoning* is the first kosher mission pack for *Quake II* and, we're happy to report, falls into the same category.

This whole new episode features 18 levels spread over several hubs. Your mission takes you through sewers, swamps and waste sieves, into a Strogg compound with its warehouses and core reactor, and then beyond that into the intelligence centre, the waste treatment plant, until finally you reach the Strogg freighter and take part in all sorts of low-gravity shenanigans.

Although you pile through various mountain ranges and spooky blue caverns, the style of *The Reckoning* is definitely first-episode *Quake II* – lots of industrial grilles, pipes and chambers; big machines, ladders and barrels; and shadowed secrets. The main differences, apart from the architecture, are the three new weapons (two guns and an item), the new monsters and a whole pile of new deathmatch levels.



If the Gex can swim like a fish, it can die like a fish.



This guy can just die, too.

DON'T POINT THAT THING AT ME

The two new weapons – the Phalanx Particle Cannon (press nine, twice) and the Ion Ripper (press five, twice) – look and feel good. The cannon occupies a meaty portion of your view screen with its grimy electronic look. Firing it piles a couple of big fiery flowers in the direction of any foe, exploding nastily on impact with the force of half a rocket. The Ripper sends bouncy frisbees of light off walls at bizarre angles, forcing your opponents to do a bit of evasive break-dancing to avoid the painful boomerangs.

Both fit visually well into *Quake II*'s armoury, but their usefulness or necessity in a rank of fairly well-balanced weapons is questionable. The Phalanx projectiles are powerful but irritatingly slow-moving, and their particle effects look a bit pathetic alongside the awesome might of the dissolving RailGun. The

Ripper's weapons are fast and hurtful, and the random nature of their ricochets makes it possible to use them to shoot round corners or perform 'clever' shots.

The Trap – which sits grenade-like in your inventory – provides some new hilarity for your deathmatches. It looks and works like the 'ghost-sucking' device in *GhostBusters* (the one you'd hope would suck in Dan Ackroyd but always ended up sucking in the ghosts). Lob it into a fray of pirouetting deathmatchers, then laugh maniacally as the glowing yellow spiral of light sucks in anyone within a 20-metre radius. Gigggle as beefy players flail around in mid-air, squealing to escape the might of the Trap. Anything drawn in and splattered by the device – be they DM opponent or nearby monstie – ends up as health capsules (useful when exploring the first aid-free levels). Avid *Quake* players might remark on the

similar device found in the great Total Conversion, *PainKeep*. However, the deadly 'dimensional gate' in *PainKeep* was more powerful, and therefore better and more hilarious than *The Reckoning*'s Trap.

PETS WIN PRIZES

The mission pack's one new monster is the Gex, a kind of leaping gorilla-type beast not dissimilar to the demons in the original *Quake*. These boys have a few gimmicks up their sleeve. Firstly, they can really jump. Like horrible bi-ped fleas, the apes spring about all over the place, which makes them hard to track and easy to be complacent about. Next, they can swim. With a disturbing likeness to Patrick Duffy in *The Man From Atlantis*, these yellow thugs undulate disturbingly through water, happily chasing you for miles through the various mountain springs which dot the episode.



Er, a bridge might come in handy at this particular moment in time.



More of the same – which can only be a good thing in *Quake II*'s case.



A scene reminiscent of the opening screen of *Quake II* itself.

KONING (MISSION PACK 1)

And when you finally nail them, they explode into great gobs of deadly acid. The meat explosion is yellow, and these silver lumps of fish flesh that are painful to the touch come piling down around you.

There have been some subtle enhancements to the usual roster of nasties, just to keep you on your toes. The grunts, for example, now come in a few new, deadly guises. The slight greyer variants now take a good three or four super-shotgun hits to spank, and when they turn to face you they could either fire blue laser bolts, electro-boomerangs or – worse – the evil, red laserpoint gun, designed just like the gadget that people from Essex and unimaginative clubbers use to spice up their evenings. A grunt with a laser can spike you from a healthy distance. If you try to avoid the grunt, he'll track you until you find a piece of decent cover. Very nasty. Aside from those small but scary enhancements, the rest of the menagerie stays the same. Expect tanks, cyborgs, repair bots and those floaty things.

In fact, your worst enemy when playing *The Reckoning* may well be your memory. It's been a while since we all played single-player *Quake*, and you may find yourself getting caught out by the

more pedestrian enemies, like fish and those small helicopter robots. Our tip: revise *Quake II* to avoid embarrassment.

As per usual, the plot gets abandoned in the first five minutes, and the game adopts the same hub-to-hub progression as vanilla *Quake II*, plus all the computer updates and take-the-disk-to-the-computer puzzles. Which is fine. There's plenty here to keep any pale young *Quake* ninja focussed for a good 24 hours.

The eight new deathmatch levels are a little disappointing. Obviously designed with ten-or-more-a-side Internet games in mind, the sprawling, complex unmemorable architecture doesn't work too well for a four- or five-player session. There is a cool reworking of *Quake II*, DM7 with a couple of extra rooms, but again it suffers from size-does-matter.

Overall, while gripping and fun to play, *The Reckoning* stumbles by not venturing as far as the superlative *Quake* mission pack *Scourge Of Armagon*. While remaining faithful to the *Quake II* canon, maintaining the authentic look and feel and not fiddling around too much with the weapons or the bad guys, *The Reckoning* is an enjoyable but unspectacular add-on. **PCZ**

ALSO CONSIDER

QUAKE MISSION PACK: THE SCOURGE OF ARMAGON

(Activision, £24.99) Now this was an add-on of substantial quality. Loads of new weapons, three new monsters, new power-ups, stunning new levels, and a pacy real-world feel which left most mission packs – amateur and professional – standing.

PCZ #49, 90%

MYSTERIES OF THE SITH (Virgin, £19.99)

A good example of how a mission pack can expand the original game five-fold. This add-on for *Jedi Knight* improved the shoddier aspects of the game, bunged in a load of new levels, introduced allies and even a bit of Darth Vader. Predictably, it once was the servant, now it is the massster.

PCZ #62, 95%

WHAT'S NEW

Unlike the mission packs that garnished the original *Quake*, *The Reckoning* seems a little unseasoned

The levels in themselves are excellent, but the two new weapons, although more than welcome, are unlikely to be anyone's prime weapon of choice. The acid-spurting Gex is a welcome throwback to *Quake*'s flesh-shredding demons, and the grunts have taken the time to train themselves in a few new weapons – just for you.

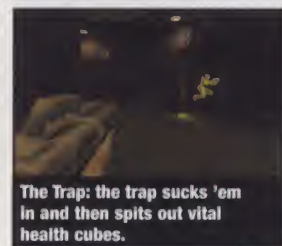
Deathmatch-wise, the new life-sapping trap is superb, and although the eight new multi-player levels aren't going to excite the one-on-one contingent, they'll more than satiate a bloodthirsty horde of ten or more. Anyway, it's *Quake II* for God's sake – by definition, more of the same has got to be good.



The Phalanx Particle Cannon: a welcome addition to the *Quake* armoury. Needs some practice.



The Ion Ripper: fast-moving discs of death that ricochet off every angled surface.



The Trap: the trap sucks 'em in and then spits out vital health cubes.

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS *Quake II* look and feel •

Strong level design • New weapons

DOWNERS Not much innovation

- New monster a bit weak
- Deathmatch levels big and boring

84 No classic, but it'll keep you going until *Quake III* comes out

SPEC OPS: RANGERS

★ £39.99 • Take 2 Interactive • June '98



ALSO CONSIDER

SEAL TEAM (EA, £9.99) An ageing simulation that gave you control over a four-man squad in Vietnam. By today's standards, the graphics are dreadful and it's hardly a bag of laughs. You'd also be lucky to find it anywhere but in a bargain bin.

PCZ #7, 77%

JEDI KNIGHT (LucasArts/VE, £44.99) Gorgeously scripted Star Wars shoot 'em up whose only similarity to *Spec Ops* is the ability to play in the third person. The add-on *Mysteries Of The Sith* incorporated a few friendlies for you to fight alongside.

PCZ #55, 94%

Special Forces Quake TC (www.planetquake.com/specialforces/files.html) A fairly playable total conversion for owners of the original *Quake*. Good for a free download and has now spawned a multi-player version called *Strike Team*. The creator of *SFQuake* is now working on a *Quake II* version.

Not reviewed

After a year-long stint in the Cub Scouts, Richie Shoemaker chronicles his adventures as a US Army Ranger before his recent discharge and consequent move to the Brownies

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM (without 3Dfx card): **Processor** MMX 200MHz Pentium **Memory** 24Mb **Also requires** 8x CD-ROM **SUPPORTS** DirectX compatible sound and video card, DirectX 5.0 or higher **WE SAY** 166MHz Pentium, 32Mb RAM, 8x CD-ROM, 3Dfx graphics accelerator card (Voodoo2 support coming soon), DirectX compatible sound and video card, DirectX 5.0 or higher recommended

PCZONE
RECOMMENDED

Spec Ops is unlike anything you will have ever played. Okay, there are obvious similarities with *Seal Team*, but the emphasis in gameplay terms is more towards action than in EA's ageing simulation. There are also similarities with *Jedi Knight* if you play it regularly in third-person perspective. For the most part, though, *Spec Ops* is refreshingly original. But before we tell you why, let's first tell you what it's all about.

As a tactical action game, *Spec Ops* puts you in the well-trained shoes of the US' favourite guerrilla unit. Being the army equivalent of the Navy Seals, it's the Rangers' role to basically move fast and get the job done

with the minimum of fuss. These guys specialise in stealth rather than one-man carpet bombing, and would rather creep through a forest with an MP5 than stand on a hilltop with an M60 in each hand, catching bullets in their pearly-white teeth.

Compared with the current crop of 3D action games, *Spec Ops* offers a more cerebral challenge. First of all you have to choose which men you take with you on any given mission: you'll have to balance firepower with mission requirements, choose a sniper to take out those bumbling hordes from afar, and you'd best pick a heavy-weapons guy to back him up. Missions may even require you to destroy a few Scud launchers, so you'll have to make sure you pick someone with enough satchel charges or you might have to spend precious seconds searching in-between buildings for extra equipment. A quick trigger-finger may be

handy, but a head for tactics is essential.

MEN IN OLIVE DRAB

Having two men under your control lends the game massive strategic appeal. Controlling one, you have to send the other up ahead to scout the area. Once that's done, it's your turn to move up and take out any soldiers that lie in wait. Of course, you could take the sod-it approach and just surge forward with guns blazing, but you probably wouldn't make 100 yards before a full squad of enemy soldiers hear you rushing forward and cut you down.

Another aspect that affects the way you play is ammunition. So often, you'll run into a screaming Iraqi and find you have to reload while he gleefully plants a few shots into your already holed-up flak jacket. In this instance, all you can do is lie prone, slam in a fresh clip and hope that there's a medikit lying roundabouts. This level of AI gives the game a realistic appeal that puts many other games to shame. If you're pinned down by small arms fire, throw a grenade over and it'll flush the poor bastard out and into the waiting hail of bullets from your comrade. For once, team-mates have intelligence; although they have been known to get stuck behind trucks and fall off ledges – but then, who said soldiers could think for themselves?

SAVE THE RAINFORESTS

Each of the five missions is divided into either three or four phases. Objectives usually involve either demolition, rescue or capturing the enemy commander, and the environments themselves look stunning, especially in the rain-soaked Colombian mission where you have to quickly destroy a training camp and capture the commander. Here the rain beats down relentlessly; and guards lie in wait behind trees, sometimes with grenade launchers, ready to cut your balls from your steaming carcass.

Particularly striking are the lighting effects. In the first mission, where you have to secure a downed spy plane, the moon casts an eerie glow over the land, only to be lit up by tracer

fire and burning grenade attacks. The urban mission is equally gorgeous, with close fog hiding a Russian tank and snipers in dilapidated buildings.

There are a few clipping problems when controlling Rangers close to buildings and vehicles, and occasionally they go into epileptic spasms and 'trip' over things for no apparent reason. Also, if you've yet to invest in a 3D card, don't expect *Spec Ops* to come to the rescue with a passable software version. In fact, it's fair to say that unless you've got a 3Dfx card tucked safely inside your PC, the game is practically unplayable, even on a high-spec machine.

Like the graphics, the sound is awesome. Plug your headphones in and you can kiss goodbye to a couple of days in the real world. Unfortunately, the game fails to push itself into classic status simply because of a lack of missions – some are incredibly difficult and some are far too easy. The urge to succeed is relentless, and the game is certainly as addictive as anything you can buy on street corners, but once you've been through all the missions you start to feel a little let down. Doing it all again on a higher difficulty setting just doesn't cut it, and with a complete lack of multi-player support, it's likely to slip off your hard drive within a couple of weeks. But, hey, what a couple of weeks it'll be. [A]

✚ We're running a special *Spec Ops* tips guide in next month's issue, out Thursday 9 July.

PCZVERDICT

↑ **UPPERS** Wide variety of missions

- Intuitive control method • Impressive AI, graphics and especially sound • Wonderful mix of action and simulation

↓ **DOWNERS** 3Dfx only • Virtually unplayable in software mode

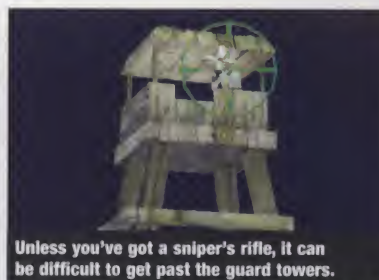
- Some missions are over too quickly • Longevity could be a problem • No multi-player support

88

Addictive, original and fun – but it's over all too quickly

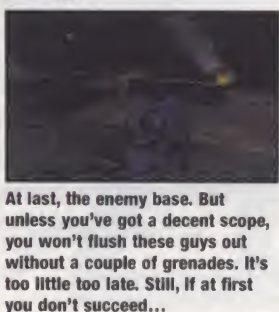
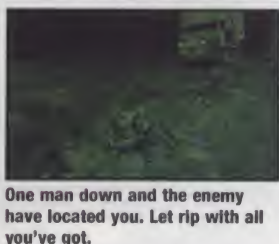
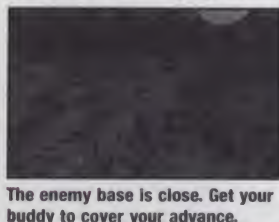
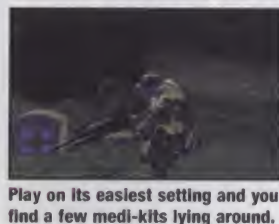
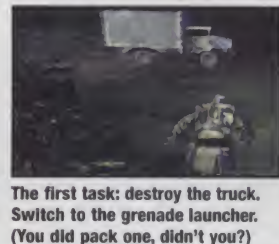
“The sound is awesome. Plug your headphones in and you can kiss goodbye to a couple of days in the real world”

ASSAULT



FIRST STEPS

How to almost complete the first phase – just make sure you do it quicker than us



COMING SOON

Hopefully by Christmas we'll see a mission pack that includes a whole bunch of multi-player support, so those of us with modems or office networks can start small-scale war on our PCs. There's also talk of a mission editor. But what really interests us are the planned sequels. *Specs Ops* is set to turn into a series of games that should link together all the world's elite forces, including our own dear SAS. In fact, *Specs Ops 2* promises full control of the world famous Navy Seals in all their rubber-suited wetness – minus Charlie Sheen, of course. However, we'll have to wait about a year for that one.

CLEVER BOYS?

Soldiers getting stuck behind buildings and falling to their deaths may be one thing, but the auto-targeting function that makes the game innovative also starts to annoy, especially when your man locks onto an enemy that poses no threat due to being behind a wall. In this case, you have to go into first-person view and flush him out with a grenade; try it any other way and you'll probably lose your 'nads. Conversely, there are times when in clear view your Ranger fails to hit a target standing right in front of him. However, the range of movement afforded to you makes up for these shortcomings – just.



Mind if I have a quick lie down?



An excerpt from the forthcoming public information film *Don't Run With Swords In The Corridor*.



You'd expect better of *Changing Rooms*.



Leave it, Terry - he ain't worth it!



An excerpt from the forthcoming public information film *What To Do When The Ratmen Invade*.



Try as he might, Chaindog just can't match Lara Croft's innate sex appeal.



Tiffany hated insects so much, she bred giant mutated ones in her garden, just so she could hack them to death once they were fully grown.

Not bad for a dungeon, really.

“In real life it would be hideous, unbelievable carnage which would haunt you to the grave. Here, it's just funny”



DEATHTRAP DUNGEON

★ £34.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out now

With a name like that, it's safe to say we're entering tongue-in-cheek swords-and-sorcery territory. *Charlie Brooker* elucidates

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM Also requires 4x speed CD-ROM **WE SAY** A 3D accelerator is highly recommended

After what seems like forever, Eidos Interactive's much-vaunted *Deathtrap Dungeon* has arrived at last. Based on the infamous Ian Livingstone *Fighting Fantasy* book of the same name, it's an action-oriented, platform-puzzle-fighting-type thing which looks a heck of a lot like *Tomb Raider* (PCZ #57, 94%). In fact, at times it looks so much like *Tomb Raider* you half expect Eidos to slap an injunction on *themselves*, claiming breach of copyright.

The similarities are overwhelming: labyrinthine, boobey-trap-laden levels, *Prince Of Persia*-style puzzles, simple fighting sequences, and a lead character with an enormous bosom. In fact, there's a choice of lead characters – one male, one female – and they've both got huge tits. The bloke – Chaindog, a Conan-a-like barbarian – could easily swap places with Eva Herzigova in one of those pile-up-inducing Wonderbra ads. Hello, boys. Now that *would* halt the traffic.

DEATHTRAP DAGENHAM

There are differences between the two games of course, the most obvious being the use of varied camera angles. Whereas *Tomb Raider* utilised a faintly ominous 'stalker' view throughout, *DD* employs both this and the *Resident Evil* multiple-view model, although unlike Capcom's horror 'em up, *DD*'s camera pans and zooms to follow the action. It's a bit like watching the proceedings unfold on CCTV. While this constant switching from one angle to another keeps the game visually exciting and pacy, it's not always easy to tell where your next attacker is coming from. It also makes some of the leaps difficult to judge – which is very frustrating when the life of your character depends on it.

DD has a higher action quotient than you might expect. At times, it's almost like a beat 'em up, with wave upon wave of crazed, slaving creatures hurling themselves at you. This is how Boyzone must feel, although presumably Ronan and company don't fight off their fans with war hammers and swords, which is what happens here.

There's a worrying trend for in-game dismemberment at the moment (witness *Die By The Sword* – PCZ #64, 75% – and this month's *Carnageddon II* preview on page 56), and *Deathtrap Dungeon* is the latest culprit to hop on the limb-cleaving bandwagon: arms, legs and heads fly through the air and bounce off the walls, spraying thick globules of blood as they go. In real life it would be hideous, unbelievable carnage which would haunt you to the grave. Here, it's just funny, although the level where you're encouraged to run around hacking scantily-clad women to pieces in a murderous frenzy until you're standing ankle-deep in gore will do little to persuade the critics that video games are a valid 20th century art form which deserves their support.

DEATHTRAP DONCASTER

To be fair, it's not just women – everything you can think of gets it in the neck at some point. There are 55 types of sword-fodder, from bizarre blue imps to the fearsome centrepiece, Melkor the dragon. In case you were doubting the game's tongue-in-cheek credentials, the appearance of a few bizarre opponents – such as the ones who hop about inside a gigantic shoe – should clear things up fairly pronto.

The actual sword-fighting itself is disappointingly basic, with just a handful of different manoeuvres and the all-important blocking stance. The enemies tend to attack from all sides at

ALSO CONSIDER

TOMB RAIDER II (Eidos £39.99)

This is the game that inspired *Deathtrap Dungeon*. Needless to say *Tomb Raider* is better in every department.

PCZ #57, 94%

HEXEN II (Activision £39.95) If you like the look of *Deathtrap Dungeon* but prefer first-person games, then look no further than Raven's classic.

PCZ #54, 94%

DIE BY THE SWORD (Interplay £39.99)

This is a very gory alternative to *Deathtrap Dungeon*, with more emphasis on action than on puzzle solving.

PCZ #64, 75%

once, so by the end of each level your back is covered in scars.

And finally, there's the puzzles, which are generally a case of finding a switch, then finding another switch, pulling off a couple of tricky jumps, then pulling switch number three. And this goes on and on for one level after another.

If you can be bothered to stick with it, it's not actually that bad. In fact, in many ways *Deathtrap Dungeon* is quite a good game, it's just that it could have been such a lot more – for example, if they'd included more RPG elements. On the plus side, the levels are huge and well designed, and there are loads of different characters. There's always something going on, and it's usually quite entertaining. The graphics aren't bad (assuming you've got a 3D card, that is), the controls are easy to get the hang of, and it'll run acceptably on a relatively low-spec Pentium 133. In fact, its only crime is that it simply doesn't excel at any of the things it sets out to do.

PCZ VERDICT

↑ **UPPERS** Easy to get into • Huge levels • 'Amusing' enemies

↓ **DOWNERS** A bit derivative • Occasionally awkward camera angles • A bit too repetitive

70 The Crystal Maze meets Conan The Barbarian

MARTHA, MEET FRANK, DANIEL AND... CHAINDOG?

Read on and be truly appalled at *DD*'s character names, ranging from the bizarre to the ridiculous

We see countless computer games here at *PC Zone*, and boy, have we encountered some *rubbish* character names in our time. We've controlled gung-ho commandos with monikers like Corporal Kill and General Atrocitizer. We've run rings around unpronounceable, apostrophe-strewn alien races hailing from unlikely-sounding worlds – such as The P'hatthils from the planet Schpong, or the F'c'nwn'kaz from the desert moon of Hoojamaflip. And we've tackled suspiciously familiar-sounding footballers – like Alam Cheerer or Pool Casgoine – in soccer games which hadn't secured the right licence.

But even we were appalled – yes, appalled – by the sheer rubbishness of the character names featured in *Deathtrap Dungeon*. Check out this compendium of bilge...

FANG

That's the name of the town where the dungeon's been built. The cries of despair from the local tourist board are almost palpable.

BARON SUKUMVIT

Baron *who*? He's supposed to be the man responsible for encouraging adventurers into the dungeon. Is it just us, or does his name sound like the title of some incredibly filthy German porn film?

MELKOR

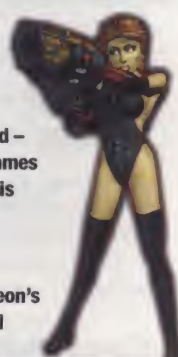
The evil red dragon you're supposed to be terrified of: pity that his name conjures up images of refined English butlers. "I say, Melkor, would you mind *awfully* buttering the underside of this roasted hog? There's a good chap."

RED LOTUS

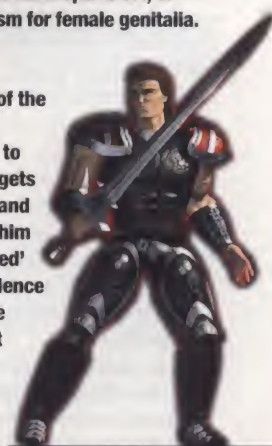
The female protagonist. Crass *Conan* aficionados will doubtless recall *Red Sonja*, an unforgivably poor star vehicle for Brigitte Nielsen which appeared many moons ago. Perhaps this is some kind of sick homage to that towering opus. Whatever. It still sounds like either a) a flash sports car, or b) a bizarre ancient Oriental euphemism for female genitalia.

CHAINDOG

"A name won in the savage war pits of the barbarian north." So says the press bumph. Presumably they're referring to Newcastle's Bigg Market. Anyway, it gets worse. "He was so brutal, so vicious and cunning that the guards had to keep him chained up, like a dog, to be 'unleashed' only when he was required to fight. Hence his name. Chaindog. The only word he ever responded to, the only word that meant anything to him. In a life of violence and sudden death, he held on to that name, held onto the sense of identity it gave him." The great big prick.



Red Lotus takes no prisoners.



Chaindog shows off his weapon.

TEAM APACHE

★ £39.99 • Mindscape • Out June '98



Team Apache features effects like dynamic lighting, which looks lovely when the rockets start flying.

A new chopper sim? Dave Mathieson knows all about getting high, so it's probably right up his cloud base

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** You're a lot better off with a P200MMX or higher, 32Mb RAM, and a Voodoo2 graphics or decent Direct3D card. And don't forget a joystick

PCZONE CLASSIC



Helicopters are pretty smart things, being able to fly just about

everywhere and all that. This general smartness makes them pretty useful in wars, and hence a good subject for computer games. There have been chopper sims on the PC for nearly as long as there have been sims of fixed-wing planes, but there's never been enough of them on the shelves at any one time to give you much of a choice, and there's usually only ever one out there that's really worth getting.

The current flavour of the month is EA's excellent *Longbow 2*. This is aimed at fans of ultra-realism, featuring all the weapons, sensors and other stuff that's packed into the AH-64 Apache gunship. It's also got lots of very detailed terrain to hide behind, and generally great graphics.

Team Apache is another AH-64 sim with cutting-edge graphics, but developers Simis have adopted a different approach from that used in *Longbow 2*.

Instead of going all-out to accurately model the real thing, they've simplified the on-board systems which (they reckon) leaves you more time to actually enjoy the gameplay and concentrate on fighting and tactics.

WHAT'S THE CATCH, THEN?

But how much has been left out? Well, the biggest difference between *Longbow 2* and this game is that in *Team Apache* you only get to play the pilot. This means that weapon targeting is out of your hands, and although you can instruct the computer-controlled co-pilot/gunner (CPG) to shoot targets, there are none of those long-range camera views and other sensors. Instead, the computer automatically prioritises targets, leaving you to select and fire the weapons.

My initial reaction was that leaving out the CPG's role from *Team Apache* was like leaving out half the game. However, the biggest problem with *Longbow* is that you have to do both jobs in real time – which is fine when cruising towards the target area with the autopilot switched on, but in the heat of battle you don't have time to do both jobs at once, and end up letting the computer's AI handle the targeting anyway.

Team Apache's approach really just takes this one step further.

While the on-board systems have been simplified, the flight model definitely has not. Having never actually flown an Apache, I'm buggered if I know whether or not *Team Apache*'s choppers handle accurately, but they feel suitably wobbly and awkward, and flying along at 100ft takes a lot of concentration.

LUSH GRAPHICS ALERT

But flying low is made considerably less stressful by the excellent graphics. While *Longbow*'s got plenty of rolling terrain, it's been criticised for a lack of actual ground objects. Not so with *Apache*. There are plenty of roads, houses (some with cars parked outside), trees and even cities, complete with skyscrapers that you can fly around. Everything's nicely detailed, too, which helps convey a real sense of speed.

Team Apache's got the usual dynamic lighting effects, including the obligatory lens flare, and the helicopters themselves look lush. The attention to detail is superb, and one of the first things you notice when you switch on your engines is the shadow of your rotors flickering across the cockpit. Switch to an outside view and you can see rippling circles in the grass caused by the down-draft.

But best of all is the weather. Rain showers feature proper rain drops, while the storms come with forked lightning and thunder. Even more to Simis' credit is the fact that the whole thing runs incredibly smoothly on a P200MMX with a 3Dfx card, with no noticeable jerkiness, even in the middle of cities.

MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Gameplay consists of the usual instant action, multi-player, training and single missions, as well as dynamic campaigns. The first of these is set in Colombia, with a drugs-related theme, while the second is in Latvia. When you start a campaign, you get the chance to manage the men in your unit, which is where *Team Apache* really stands out. Each man has a set of traits that make him more or less suitable in

REACH FOR THE SKY

A quick manoeuvre through *Team Apache*



1 Missions in *Team Apache* are eventful things. Here, we've got to take out some drug dealers at the airport...



2 ...but first we'll whack that jeep. *Team Apache*'s commands let you order your wingmen to do the dirty work.



3 Apache versus Jeep – it's not fair, but nor is life.



4 We're at the airport. It's time for some nice explosions. The ones in *Team Apache* are more meaty than those in your average sim.



5 Targeting is handled automatically by the computer. This usually works out okay, as here, where the biggest threat, a SAM launcher, has been picked out.



6 And it's back home for a burger, a Bud and some of the local 'nose candy'.



Team Apache is one of the first military flight sims to feature half-decent cities, and the game doesn't slow to a crawl when you fly through them, either.



Enemy gunners aren't shy to let rip if you get too close.



The ground scenery's nice and detailed when you get close up.



You can land upside-down if you want.



Sod carrots, an Infrared sight gives much better night vision.



Not surprisingly, *Team Apache* features... teams of Apaches.



The virtual cockpit provides all-round vision.

WHY ARE HELICOPTERS SUCH BASTARDS TO FLY?

Helicopters always seem to be crashing, so they must be a bit tricky to master. But why?

It doesn't take a genius to work out how helicopters get off the ground: the rotors are like little wings that zip round and pull the whole thing up. That's the easy bit. The hard bit is controlling the thing. There are three controls – the cyclic, the collective and the tail rotor. The cyclic is the thing that's controlled by the joystick, and it basically sets the direction that the rotors pull the chopper. Collective is how much the rotor blades bite into the air, which controls how much thrust is provided. Finally, the tail rotor can be used like a rudder to spin the helicopter round on its axis.

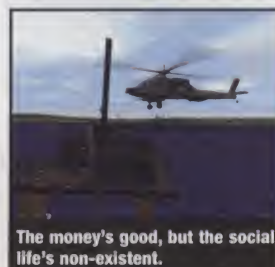
So if you're flying in a straight line and want to go up a bit, you can pull back on the stick, but just doing this will simply make the helicopter 'flatten out'. This will indeed make it rise, but it'll also slow down. If you pull back too much, it'll shoot upwards pretty fast and stop moving horizontally – bad news in combat. So careful juggling of collective and cyclic are needed. Be sure to practice just flying about before you even think about going into combat. You'll need to be better than Mike Smith if you're going to get very far in this game. Still, if Prince Andrew can do it...



Rain so real you can almost feel it running down your neck.



Lens flare alert! Ooh, that sun's dazzling. Where's me shades?



The money's good, but the social life's non-existent.

ALSO CONSIDER

LONGBOW 2 (Electronic Arts £39.99) The choice chopper sim for realism heads. It's got a steep learning curve, and it needs a pretty decent PC, though. **PCZ #59, 92%**

FLIGHT SIM 98 (Microsoft £49.98) While it concentrates mainly on planes, it features one helicopter that's an absolute bugger to fly – which is probably a sign of realism. No guns, though. **PCZ #55, 94%**

COMANCHE 3 (NovaLogic £29.99) More 'arcadey' than the rest, but it looks good and plays great. **PCZ #51, 92%**

SIMCOPTER (EA/Maxis £TBA) Not at all realistic, but good fun because you get to fly around proper cities. Sadly underrated, this one. **PCZ #47, 85%**

certain conditions, and it's up to you to keep things running smoothly. If your unit starts to suffer too badly, morale plummets, and pilots and ground crew start underperforming.

Combat is a pretty hectic affair, and flying straight into a combat zone means instant death. Sneaking around is much more sensible, popping up now and then to see what's over the horizon.

The simplifications made to *Team Apache* are bound to put off a certain kind of sim fan, for whom attention to detail is of the utmost importance. But then they'd be missing one vital ingredient – playability, which *Team Apache*'s got bags of. While it may not have all the instruments of the real thing, the flight model and gorgeous graphics do a great job of convincing you that you're flying a helicopter into combat, which is surely the point anyway.

It may not be the best sim, but it's certainly the most fun. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Great graphics that are pretty fast, even on a fairly modest PC

- Character-based gameplay that makes you really care about your boys
- Simplified controls and systems that don't take days to master
- Lots of terrain detail

DOWNERS • Clichéd Colombian drugs campaign

93 It's got the balance between fun and realism just right



Motson: "A classic finish – can't wait to see that again." Really?



"I'm f**ked." "Yeah, so am I." It had been a long season...



Brazil get the World Cup off to a fantastic start. Unless you're Scottish, of course.

PCZONE CLASSIC WORLD CUP 98

★ £39.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

ALSO CONSIDER

FIFA: RTWC 98 (Electronic Arts, £29.99) The predecessor to *World Cup 98*. Runs too slowly to be taken seriously. Upgrade now!

PCZ #59 • 80%

ACTUA SOCCER 2 (Gremlin, £29.99) Still popular in the office. Worth a look if you like fast, simple footie games.

PCZ #59 • 90%

THREE LIONS (Take Two, £39.99) Very poor effort. Check out the review in this issue – see page 102.

WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER 98 (Eidos, £39.99) Actually, not that bad. We've given it a good going over on page 103.

It's the next best thing to actually going to the tournament, but *Warren Christmas* doesn't care. He got to play the game *and* he's going to France. Git

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P100 (P166 recommended) **Memory** 16Mb RAM **Also requires** 4x CD-ROM drive **SUPPORTS** Modem and 8-player network play; 3Dfx and PowerVR cards **WE SAY** 3D accelerator and Microsoft SideWinder multi-button digital joypads highly recommended



Here we go again then – yet another PC-based football game to join the hoards. The same old crappy gameplay (that still doesn't come close to matching the five-year-old *Sensible Soccer*), cunningly disguised by a big-name licence, tarted-up graphics, improved motion-capture and half of the BBC's sports department recorded in sensi-surround-Q-dos-sound (or something).

Just "same meat, different gravy", as our friend Steve Hill says with alarmingly regularity as each new footie game arrives in the office? Well, actually, no. Call the boys round. Get the beers in. This time, to paraphrase the 1982 England World Cup squad, they've got it right.

IT GOT KNOCKED DOWN

Last Christmas, tournaments with Gremlin's *Actua Soccer 2* became almost daily routine around these

parts, while Electronic Arts' bigger-selling rival, *FIFA: Road To World Cup 98*, hardly got a look in. Why? Simple: it may have looked the dog's bollocks, but it was painfully, painfully slow. After five minutes' play, nobody (other than Chris, who reviewed it), gave it a second look.

But things are different in this 'sequel'. Much different. No longer do the players 'run' as if they're stuck in treacle. Now you get a choice of four speeds – the highest of which is actually too fast. Now you're free to enjoy what is an excellent game of football.

True, it takes some getting used to. The multitude of buttons used – covering everything from simple shooting and passing, to player selection (which isn't automatic), running (you have to keep tapping a button to sprint), automatic crosses and side-shimmies – makes the use of multi-button joypads an absolute

must (we used a pair Microsoft SideWinder joypads). But, with practice, you can put together some excellent moves.

Unlike the relatively simplistic *Actua Soccer 2*, here you'll find yourself involved in lots of penalty box scrambles and, significantly, scoring goals in dozens of different ways. It's also reasonably easy (as in not impossible) to score as a result of a free kick or corner thanks to a three-option system which enables you to direct the ball with a bendy arrow, aim it at a chosen player or target a specific space. Good stuff. (Bizarrely, you can bend goal kicks, but that's another story.)

And the artificial intelligence? It's hard to fault it, frankly, with players running intelligently off the ball (you'll even see the defence spring off-side traps), and goalkeepers who occasionally slip up (and have a tendency to palm the ball away in

HOW THE CUP WOZ WON

Run the tournament with no human competitors, and Brazil usually wins. Meanwhile, England invariably win the Fair Play award. We're not 'aving that, though...



1 Sod the traditional slow English start in major tournaments. There's no dicking about here as we whip some Tunisian ass 4-0. Elsewhere, the Scots narrowly lose 3-2 to Brazil in the opening game. Scotland scoring two goals? Yeah, right.



2 Romania next and, as in real life, they prove a little harder to beat than Tunisia. But we win 2-0 anyway, cos we're great (and, er, the game's on the medium skill setting). A place in the next round is guaranteed. Scotland draw 2-2 with Norway.



3 Colombia? Who cares? We light up a, er, cigarette... sit back... bish, bash, bosh and it's all over. A goalless draw sees us win the group. And Scotland? Well, they lose 2-1 to Morocco and promptly collect their coats. Oh how we laughed!



4 Japan in the second round? This is a joke, right? Nope, seems Jamaica and Croatia missed out. No problem here again as England cruise to a 3-0 victory. No real surprises elsewhere as the likes of Brazil, Italy and France all make it through.



Shearer sneaks past the keeper and slides one in. Which is nice. You can score in dozens of different ways in *World Cup 98*.



Note the not-very-subliminal advertising. Blimey, suddenly we feel really hungry...



Motson: "He couldn't hit a cow's backside with a banjo, this fella." Cool!

a continental style) but, on the whole, behave exactly as you'd expect. Oh, and incidentally, you can switch between three customisable formations and tactic settings as you play. Yes, that's even more buttons to remember.

IT GOT UP AGAIN

The 'meat' of the game, then, has improved greatly. And the presentation? Well, where do we start? There's tons of scene-setting video and animated cut-scenes (which you can skip at the press of a button), the in-game graphics and animation are simply superb, and the sound – including player grunts and groans and numerous crowd chants – is great too. Even the chosen theme music, Chumbawumba's 'Tubthumping', seems pretty good... until you've heard it for the four thousandth bloody time.

There's also an awful lot of commentary. Gary Lineker summarises between matches, Des Lynam introduces the games, while John Motson and Chris Waddle provide the actual commentary. Despite the occasional slip-up ("A classic finish – can't wait to see that

again" wasn't really appropriate after Sheringham had walked the ball into the net), Motson's commentary is the best – certainly the most natural – in any footie game to date.

Waddle's input, however, is as bad as you'd expect it to be. Most of the time, he just repeats what's already been said. An example? John Motson: "What a great save!"; Chris Waddle: "Well, he'll be happy with that. Great save, John!" Argghh! Waddle also has the audacity to comment on the penalties. "I've seen schoolboys take better penalties than that, John," he says. Well, we've seen professional footballers take much worse penalties than that, Chris. Know what we're saying?

NEVER GONNA PUT IT DOWN

World Cup 98 does have some small faults: red cards aren't shown for tackles from behind, for example; there are no old rules for the Classic Cup mode (golden goal in 1966, anyone?!); the climactic effects are poor; and there's still no facility for setting up mini-tournaments between friends.

Worst of all, the control system enables you to select an action before your player gets the ball.

This is not a great problem once you get used to it, but in the meantime expect passes to go amiss, players to dive in for tackles when you don't want them to... and joypads to fly across the room in frustration.

Ultimately though, the fact that we've already been playing the game solidly for an entire week – and expect to be playing it throughout the summer – says it all. *World Cup 98* is quite simply the finest football game on the PC; the perfect accompaniment to the tournament. Not so much meat and gravy, then, as a succulent chicken in white wine sauce (or something). Gorge yourself on it. **PCZ**

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Excellent gameplay • It's fast (at last) • Stunning all-round presentation • Smart Classic Cup mode

DOWNERS Chris Waddle • Quirky control system • A few rules 'missing' • Requires high-end hardware

91 This time they've got it right!

DO NOT ADJUST YOUR SET



Well would you head a medicine ball?



Two World Wars and, er, two World Cups. Nice one.

As you'd expect, a full World Cup tournament is included, with all the right teams, players (slightly inaccurate, but customisable right down to their goatee beards), dates and stadiums. You even get the option to randomise the groupings or add in one of eight extra teams (which include Russia, Canada and Elre, but not Wales or Northern Ireland). You can also play friendlies, enter various practice modes and have penalty competitions.

Best of all, though, is the Classic Cup mode which becomes available once you've won the World Cup proper on the highest skill level. Here you can compete in eight different World Cup finals from Uruguay vs Argentina 1930, through to Italy vs West Germany in 1982. Not only do these games feature Kenneth Wolstenholme doing commentary, they also feature appropriate visuals.

How cool? Just try playing England vs Germany in '66 running in black-and-white with

Mr They-Think-It's-All-Over on the mic. Even dear old dad is gonna like this one.



Post-goal animations include the keeper hitting out at the 'cameraman'. Most amusing.



5 It's the quarter-finals and we get... Germany. Oh, great. They prove to be a complete nightmare to break down. It's 0-0 after extra time but... but... we win 4-3 on penalties. Revenge is sweet! Hurrah! By the way, David Seaman is under that pile of players.



6 Forget 1966, it's 1066 all over again (or something) as we take on the French in the semi-final. They prove easier to get past than the Germans, but only just. A strike on 58 minutes from joint top scorer Sheringham (no, really) sees us through.



7 We're in the World Cup final! Wahaaaaay! But we're playing Brazil. Ooooooh, shit. A sweet strike from Shearer – now the tournament's leading marksman with five goals in total – puts us ahead after just five minutes, and then it's defend, defend, defend...



8 ... until Beckham makes a break on 86 mins and unleashes a belter from outside the box which flies past the Brazilian keeper. Oh yes! Oh yes! Oh yeeees! Whoops, I've just come. Meanwhile, a pretty, blonde Brazilian fan in the crowd begins to cry (probably).



9 England have won the World Cup! The nation goes wild! Grown men cry on the streets (except in Newcastle). Baddiel and Skinner re-write and re-release 'Three Lions' (again). Winning captain Shearer later tells the press victory was "Not bad, yeah." Sigh.



Ronaldo prepares to give it some purchase.



Shearer gives it large after putting England ahead.



The resemblance is uncanny. Note the reserve keeper, Terry Thomas.



Di Matteo sports his trademark white boots. Which is nice.

over the line.

definite World Cup

THREE LIONS

★ £34.99 • Take 2 Interactive • Out now

That tackle by Moore, and when Lineker scored, Bobby belting the ball... and Steve Hill writing

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P120 Memory 16Mb RAM Also requires 100% Windows 95-compatible computer system; Windows 95-compatible video card with 1Mb RAM; 4x CD-ROM drive; DirectX 5.0 or higher; 65Mb of hard disk space **SUPPORTS** Keyboard and digital joystick only **WE SAY** Windows 95-compatible sound card and Windows 95-compatible game pad recommended

Officially endorsed by the Football Association, *Three Lions* is the Official England Team Game. It's also officially shit, a fact that no amount of official endorsement can disguise. A more obvious endorsement would have been that of the 'Three Lions' song, but apparently Take 2 failed to acquire the rights amid rumours (subsequently denied by the song's publishers) of a demanded £200,000 fee. Not to worry, an obvious replacement was found in the shape of shoe-rockers Ocean Colour Scene. And

whatever they were paid, it was clearly too much, the upshot being a short movie of recent England action interspersed with footage of the PlayStation version, all accompanied by OCS's 'Hundred Mile High City'. The point being?

God only knows, but it does put off seeing the game for some one minute and 42 seconds. Which still doesn't quite prepare you for what is to follow. *Three Lions* doesn't look posh, to say the least, especially as San Francisco-based developers Z-Axis chose not to trouble themselves with the vagaries

of 3D acceleration. The result is an overall lacklustre affair that is years behind the lush *World Cup 98* (see page 100). The grass is hardly verdant, the crowd look painted on, and the players have clearly been beaten about the head and face. With an ugly stick.

SKOOL DAZE

Yadda-yadda-yadda-gameplay-over-graphics. Despite its international pretensions, *Three Lions* resembles a schoolyard game with everyone chasing the ball around frantically, the image further compounded by the fact that it's the size of a tennis ball. Time on the ball is a rare commodity, and it's usually a case of gaining possession and running away, which provides further cause for ridicule. David Platt-style high knees is one thing, but the players in *Three Lions* run like cartoon characters about to plummet to earth; although, perversely, some of the other animations are in fact quite passable.

As for the commentary, the

traditional cut-and-paste affair has been eschewed in favour of players barking at each other in their native tongues, which is novel for about five minutes.

IT'S A BULLSEYE!

Shooting takes place via one of the least orthodox – and arguably least workable – methods yet seen. A visible target hovers around the goal, and it can be moved around prior to shooting, with no aftertouch to be had. However, the default position of the target is generally in the vicinity of the frame of the goal (or woodwork, as was), meaning that you end up hitting the post on a regular basis and attempting to scuff the rebound in. This makes for some desperate goalmouth scrambles, but is more than a little contrived. Spectacular goals are few and far between, and at its basest level *Three Lions* is often more like rugby: mass scrums, gradually gaining ground, and eventually bundling the ball

It has a definite World Cup flava though, and in all but name it is possible to play out the 1998 tournament. With the help of *World Soccer* magazine, a great deal of research has been undertaken and all the players have accurate attributes – even the correct brand of boot. *Three Lions* certainly has the authenticity, but unfortunately you can't polish a turd. **C2**

PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS Real player names • Accurate attributes • Half-decent one-touch stuff
- DOWNERS Shocking graphics • Bad AI • Can't play ball into space

60 Could've been alright if they'd finished it



Apparently, Shearer is 5-1 against being sent off during the World Cup.



That disc is the target. Kick a ball at it.



A couple of good-looking lads; and a stylish font.

You can employ three pitch angles: left to right, top to bottom, or the isometric affair shown here.



Dunfermaline (sic) appear to have updated their stadium considerably, seen here taking on the might of Compostela, who sound shit. Bwahaha!



From a decent cross, a bullet header generally nestles in the back of the net, as demonstrated here.

WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER '98

£39.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out now

And still they come. *Steve Hill* slots in another

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor Pentium 90 Memory 16Mb RAM Also requires 4x CD-ROM drive, 1Mb video card (software version only) **SUPPORTS** 4Mb video card (Direct3D) **WE SAY** Pentium 166, Windows 95, 32Mb RAM (enables additional SFX), 4Mb Direct3D video card recommended



Big boys Eidos throw their sizeable hat into the footballing ring with the generically named *World League Soccer '98*. It does exactly what it says on the tin, enabling you to play in a number of world leagues in 1998 and beyond – although it's doubtful whether anyone will have the patience to persevere that long.

World League Soccer '98 flatters to deceive. Initially it appears impressive enough. The presentation is professional – Peter Brackley and Ray Wilkins commentate – and the graphics are crisp. It seems fairly playable and you assume that you'll soon get the hang of it. But over the course of a few days, flaws emerge that begin to grate, eventually escalating into teeth-grinding exasperation.

For starters, the tackling system is knackered. There is supposedly a soft tackle option, but this is wholly ineffectual. The only alternative, therefore, is to lunge in with a crunching slide tackle. This gives each match a distinctly 1970s feel, particularly

as tackling from behind seems to be openly encouraged, a practice that will not be tolerated at the World Cup but which seems to present no problem to the referees in *WLS '98*. Free kicks are awarded in a fairly haphazard manner. On the edge of the penalty area, the camera does at least swing round towards the goal, but in any other position little clue is given as to the whereabouts of your players.

'EAD THE BALL

In its defence, the heading is excellent, as it was in the previous *Olympic Soccer*. Accurate moves can be instigated with the head, and the angled bullet headers are particularly effective. There is a tendency for over-reliance on them though, and by far the most common goal is a cross from the wing, headed into one of the corners. This isn't always successful though, and can lead to some frantic goalmouth scrambles. But in common with the flawed *Actua Soccer 2* (PCZ #59, 90%), shooting from a few yards out is no guarantee of a goal, and a

howitzer from outside the area is often a more viable option.

One of the most crucial aspects of any football game is the selection of the player to control, or 'player select' as it's known in the trade. The selection is carried out automatically in *WLS '98*, and it often gets it wrong, particularly when defending. The first rule of football – along with play the way you're facing – is to get goalside, and this doesn't happen in *WLS '98*. You're left chasing shadows and having to turn away in order to enable a more useful defender to be selected.

World League Soccer '98 does have some excellent features, such as one-tuos, drone players and dynamic weather. But ultimately it becomes a case of fighting against the AI and the control system, and the game never really gets going and lacks any real excitement. Which is a shame. [C-]

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS Variable game speed • Hundreds of teams • Different-sized players
- DOWNERS Dodgy AI • Bad tackling • Not exciting

70

Vaguely playable, but just not that inspiring

WE HAVE A WINNER!

How do footie games compare? Steve Hill is your referee

We've seen them, we've played them and we've baited each other mercilessly like small children in a playground. Goals have been scored, decisions contested and tantrums thrown, with certain members of staff threatening to take their ball home.

Yes, the office has been awash with the sound of football lately, with pretty much everyone getting involved in the pre-France festivities. The games have come in, days have been spent playing them, and informed opinion has been garnered. As professional (*Sorry?! – Ed*) and experienced journalists, we've fervently debated their respective merits in order to help you make an important buying decision. No, not really, we just got some drunken layabouts to knock out the reviews in their lunch hour. Way-heh! If only it were that easy.

And as you should by now have ascertained, the overwhelming groundswell of opinion is in favour of *World Cup 98*, EA's inevitable mega-seller which takes the honours by some distance. Their claims that it has been in development for 12 months would appear to have been borne out, and it is a genuinely excellent game, rendering *FIFA: RTWC98* an unnecessary stop-gap release.

Three Lions seems to have been rushed out as a spoiler tactic, and contains some unforgivable bugs: a goalkeeper carrying the ball over his goal line, for instance. With a lot more work and some better graphics, the game could have been acceptable, but in comparison to *World Cup 98* it really does suffer.

World League Soccer '98 is a bit of an oddity, containing some nice ideas which are let down by poor design. The graphics are more than passable, although again are firmly trounced by those of *World Cup 98*. And if you're skint and fancy a return to top-down play, don't discount *Total Soccer* (page 116).

Ultimately though, EA have done the business on the park, which, as any pundit will confirm, is where it counts. This summer, *World Cup 98* is the real deal. [A-]





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with accurate coverage of all the best games, and something special for next month's cover

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Including our guide to how the experts create their *Quake* levels, Warren's techie Q&A and a look at Windows 98

MORE OF EVERYTHING!*

*Details correct at time of going to press; actual content may change.
Now where have we heard that before?

DON'T MISS THE NEXT ISSUE OF
PCZONE
OUT THURSDAY 9 JULY. BE THERE

PREMIER MANAGER

98



**FULLY UPDATED 97/98 VERSION OF THE
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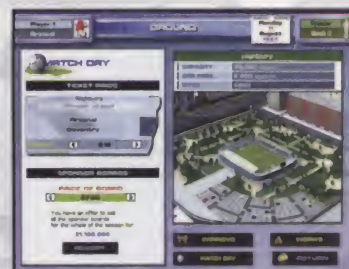
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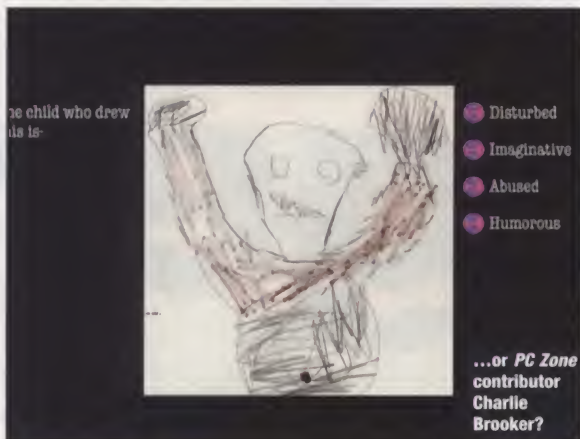
TENDER LOVING CARE

★ £39.99 • Funsoft • Out now

You wouldn't buy an interactive movie just because it's a bit pervy, would you? Would you? *Warren Christmas* is nearly swayed by a couple of babes. But not quite

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P60, Memory 16Mb RAM, 2x CD-ROM drive
WE SAY P166 with 32Mb RAM, 4x CD-ROM drive required for large viewing window; available on CD-ROM and DVD-ROM



It's got a crap Mills & Boon-style name. It's from the people behind *The 7th Guest* and *The 11th Hour*. It stars John Hurt and a bunch of Americans you've never heard of. It's an – eek! – interactive movie. Er... I'm not selling this very well, am I? But just hang on. It is very interesting nonetheless.

Tender Loving Care's plot centres around a young American couple and a not entirely unattractive live-in nurse, hired on the advice of their psychiatrist

ALSO CONSIDER

THE 11TH HOUR (Virgin, £14.99)

Looks a little dated now and, like *TLC*, lacks true adventure-style interactivity.

PCZ #35, 67%

THE 7TH GUEST (Virgin, £14.99)

Bundled with the above.

PCZ #4, 60%

PHANTASMAGORIA: A PUZZLE OF FLESH (Cendant, £29.99)

The last half-decent attempt at horror adventure, but suffered from pretty crappy puzzles.

PCZ #52, 65%

SCREAM (Warner Home Video, £11.99) You want real action? Check out Neve Campbell in this video.

(Hurt) following a car accident involving their daughter. The husband soon begins to question the nurse's ability to treat his depressed, dysfunctional and not entirely unattractive wife but, confusingly, he also finds himself sexually attracted to her. Oh, and his wife likes her too. In fact she likes the nurse a lot. And the nurse likes the wife a lot too. You know what I'm saying: it gets messy.

AND YOU ARE?

The thing is, you don't play any of these characters (you're effectively just a fly on the wall), and there's no puzzle-solving to be done either. The closest you get to proper adventuring is walking around a house reading letters, books, diaries and messages on conveniently placed computer screens.

So what do you do? Well, having watched a movie sequence, you're asked to interpret what you think is going on via a series of multiple-choice questions. You're also given a number of Thematic Apperception Tests covering sexuality and morality, religion, your childhood and beyond. You might, for instance, be shown a dog licking its balls and then you're asked:

"Would you lick yourself if you could?" No, really. Another example: "Four-foot long penises are... Funny, Offensive, Too Big or Just My Size." We're not kidding.

Your answers form a personalised psychological profile – apparently I have "healthy communication skills" (which is pretty handy for a writer), I'm "probably comfortable around vulgar people" (you have to be in the *PC Zone* office), and have a "lack of desire to work" (no comment). (Spot-on – Ed.)

More importantly, from a game perspective, your responses to the questions shape the path of the story (there are five different endings) and, from what we can make out, determine how explicit and warped it all gets. Now there's a line for the posters: "*Tender Loving Care*: It's as f**ked up as you are!"

SHORT THRILL

But is it any good? Well, actually it's hugely entertaining while it lasts. The plot has so many twists and turns that you wouldn't be surprised if an alien leapt out of John Hurt's belly (*That's been done* – Ed), the psychoanalysis part is good fun, and the production quality is first-class throughout.

The problem? That 'while it lasts' bit. It took us something like five or six hours to get through the game, but, as much as we enjoyed it, we feel no great desire to see the alternative endings. It goes without saying that £40 for six hours entertainment is not a particularly good deal. But if you see it for £20 or so, it might well be worth a look. It's not a gamer's game, true, but definitely one for pervies, amateur psychologists and – let's cover ourselves here – those who are looking for something a little different. [C+]

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS It's different • Good storyline and acting • Free psychoanalysis!

DOWNERS It's an interactive movie • It's too short • Little replay value

79 Er... it's as f**ked up as you are! (Pretty scary, eh?)



① The locations are beautifully rendered and navigation is slick but there's not much to do other than walk around.



① Allison cooks a meal while the nurse wonders where to hang her coat.



① John Hurt: lead actor, narrator and driver of flash car.



① Nurse Kathryn starts flirting from the moment she arrives. Bless 'er.



① Want to see more of Kathryn? Then you'll have to buy the game.

You buy White Label Doubles. Two great games for only £14.99.

You play them until your fingers drop off.

Your Mum thinks you have leprosy and collapses.

As you're giving her mouth to mouth resuscitation, your Dad walks in.

Your Dad walks out.

As you chase after him down the street he collapses.

You rush to a phone box to call an ambulance.

Trouble is, without fingers, you can't dial.

But hey! You've two great games for only £14.99.

White Label Doubles. Sorry.

FULLTHROTTLE
DIO

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STAR WARS
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STAR TREK
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PC Zone



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Minimum system requirements: Windows 95, Pentium 133 16MB RAM, SVGA card, 4x CD ROM Drive, Windows compatible soundcard.

For further information contact: Cendant Software UK 2 Beacontree Plaza, Gillette Way, Reading Berkshire RG2 0BS Tel: 0118 920 9111



Have fun thinking up different words for incest in the player name screen.



Harold couldn't help but wonder whether he'd bought a truck that was slightly too light.



Monster trucks like to paint meaningless nonsense on the back of their vehicles.



The driving examiner sometimes wondered why he bothered turning up.



They're big tyres, but they don't float on water – as Lionel is about to find out.



Suddenly, Barry realised a prankster at the service station had over-inflated his tyres.

MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS 2

★ £39.99 • Microsoft • Out now

This had to be given to **Patrick McCarthy** because he's the only one on the team who can control a truck without dribbling

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** Direct3D compatible accelerator cards, Force Feedback joystick, Win95 compatible soundcards, network play **WE SAY** P200, 32Mb RAM and 3Dfx/PowerVR card highly recommended

ALSO CONSIDER

CARMAGEDDON (SCI £34.99) Hard-driving mayhem, with a much better sense of speed and a complete lack of hillbilly associations.

PCZ #50 • 95%

GRAND THEFT AUTO (DMA/BMG

£34.99) Although not strictly speaking just a race game, it gives you more reason to shout "Yee-haw".

PCZ #58 • 92%

SCREAMER RALLY (Virgin £24.99)

Did straightforward off-road racing far better, plus it looks and plays better.

PCZ #57, 91%



ON THE GO

Ask any Sheffield Wednesday fan what Monster Trucks are and they'll tell you they're the things that Yorkshire Television considers to be more important than Wednesday winning the League Cup – because that's what they cut to show instead of the victory celebrations. Apart from in Leeds, other places where Monster Truck racing is popular include... well, any place in the States where people take the notion of familial love a mite too literally.

You know the sort of thing I'm talking about: everyone's really good at playing the banjo, but they can't talk without

dribbling on their dungarees and they all have faces like semi-inflated carrier bags.

For those of you who aren't familiar with Monster Truck racing, it's basically racing between normal cars which have had their engines replaced by something from an Abrams battle tank, their suspension replaced

Alain Menu or Carlos Sainz in it – they're just not good enough.

LOOK AND LEARN

There are several courses to choose from, although none of them stand out in any particular way. They've been given a range of wild-sounding names but, like the hideous 'rahk' music that

lightning storm in the graveyard course slows things down and jerks things up.

BIG, FAT, BOUNCY THINGS

As racing games go, it's a bit disappointing. The network bashing-about options are okay, but the racing's a bit slow-paced and dull (you never get much above 80mph), and the lack of a season option is a major oversight – who wants to compete in single races over and over again? It's competently put together, but it just doesn't do much for me. **PCZ**

See Extended Play on page 164 for ways to enhance the original game.

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS The engine sounds are quite nice • You can crash through bits of scenery • There are loads of views and an instant replay facility

DOWNERS The music is appalling • It's really slow-paced for a racing game • Most of the views are totally unhelpful when racing • Single races only – no season mode

70 It's got monster trucks. But it isn't especially mad.

☛ If you want tyre marks in your game, you'll need a seriously fast processor.



“There's probably a sleeping-with-your-sister bonus in there somewhere, too”

by those things the council use to ride up and down in to fix broken street lamps, and their tyres replaced by helium-filled weather balloons. Depending on the type of race you're taking part in, you either have to win in the conventional manner (by lapping faster than everyone else) or, if you're in one of the 'summit rumbles', by whacking everyone else about so that you're on the summit the longest. There's probably a sleeping-with-your-sister bonus in there somewhere as well. It says in the on-line manual – with typical American modesty – that “the drivers on the professional monster truck tour are the most skilled in the world”. So that's presumably why you don't see Michael Schumacher,

permeates the game, don't really have anything original in them. Sadly, the arenas are only available with network or modem play. Disappointingly for single players, there's no season mode – just a range of one-off races. Which is a bit crap, really.

Looks-wise, it's nothing to drag your mates round to wow them with, but it's alright. You can mess with the graphical detail to make everything run faster – from image quality, scenery complexity, screen resolution or choice of graphics renderer – but to get the best out of it you'll need a P200 and a 3D accelerator card; with anything slower and without the accelerator it runs like Bernard Manning in astronaut boots – and even little extra details like the

CASTROL HONDA SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONS

★ £34.99 • Interactive Entertainment • Out now

No prizes for brevity, but it does what it says on the tin. *Steve Hill* squeezes into the house leathers

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 **Memory** 16Mb **Controls** Keyboard, joystick, mouse **SUPPORTS** SoundBlaster and compatibles, D3D, 3Dfx, PowerVR **WE SAY** A P166 is the minimum you can get away with; 3D card essential

With car-based driving games almost at saturation point, developers are increasingly turning their hands to two-wheeled shenanigans. Hot on the trail of Ubi Soft's *Redline Racer*, this latest effort comes courtesy of accurately named newcomers Interactive Entertainment, pre-empting Virgin's promising *Superbikes World Championship* by months. *Castrol Honda Superbike World Champions* forgoes the transient thrills of arcade tomfoolery, and touts itself as a hard-nosed motorcycle racing sim. The team responsible for the

game are clearly big bike fans, a fact that becomes all too evident when a casual perusal of the various options reveals a choice

“Casual perusal of the options reveals a choice of sprockets, whatever they are”

of sprockets, whatever they are. Not interested. However, an in-depth knowledge of motorcycle mechanics isn't really necessary, as the novice rider is ably catered for. In fact, with braking and steering assist switched on and an automatic gearbox, you scarcely need to be there at all. These moron-proof options do give you a chance to learn the courses though, and eventually

you'll have the confidence to take the stabilisers off and attempt to control 160 brake horse power of throbbing motorcycle unaided. At which point you'll inevitably career into the nearest concrete abutment. But despite *CHSWC*'s simulation pretensions, rather than being tossed around like a rag doll and incurring severe cranial injuries, you simply keel over and then get back on your trusty steed; although, in fairness, the bike can incur a variety of damage if desired.

THINK BIKE!

The official CH endorsement has given Interactive Entertainment licence to go to town on the bike, and you get to straddle the 750cc RC45, probably the most advanced four-stroke machine in the world, offering the latest in programmable fuel injection, a distinct V-four engine full of lightweight titanium parts, and a chassis with enough variation of

adjustment to ensure the machine can win at every race track in the world. Which is nice. It does give the game an air of authenticity though, as do the tracks, with a brace located in each of England, Greece, USA, Indonesia and Motegi (in Japan and owned by Honda). An entire championship can be attempted – with qualifying and everything – or single race weekends can be contested.

It is *CHSWC*'s flexibility that gives it lasting appeal, as pretty much everything can be tweaked. Graphically, it's clearly an improvement on *Full Throttle* on the ZX Spectrum, although in these accelerated days, stunning visuals are taken for granted and it occasionally looks a bit scruffy, with some dodgy clipping and a tendency to jerk (the minimum spec claim of a P133 proves no less than heresy). But if these foibles can be forgiven, there is enough here to while away more than a few hours, and the game is certainly challenging enough to keep you coming back for more. Innit? **PCZ**

ALSO CONSIDER

REDLINE RACER (Ubi Soft £39.99)
A far more arcade experience that also looks a lot nicer.

PCZ #62 • 78%

MANX TT (Psygnosis £39.99)
Undemanding Sega-developed arcade and Saturn conversion.

PCZ #57 • 70%

MOTO RACER (EA £39.99)
Motocross with a token bit of superbikes thrown in.

PCZ #51 • 77%

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS Authentic • Very flexible • Split-screen is okay
- DOWNERS Graphics could be better • High minimum specs • Very difficult in full-on sim mode

79 Realistic motorcycle mayhem that's a little on the dull side.



Castrol Honda Superbike World Champions enables you to get up close and personal with a rear tyre.



Check out the replays as seen by a series of cameras set up on the trackside.



At the back of the grid, with five laps in which to make amends.



Some dangerous street tracks provide plenty of opportunities for spillages.



Overdo it on the bend and you'll be heading for the shrubbery.



The rear view enables you to see exactly who's on your tail – and react accordingly.

TEAM APACHE™

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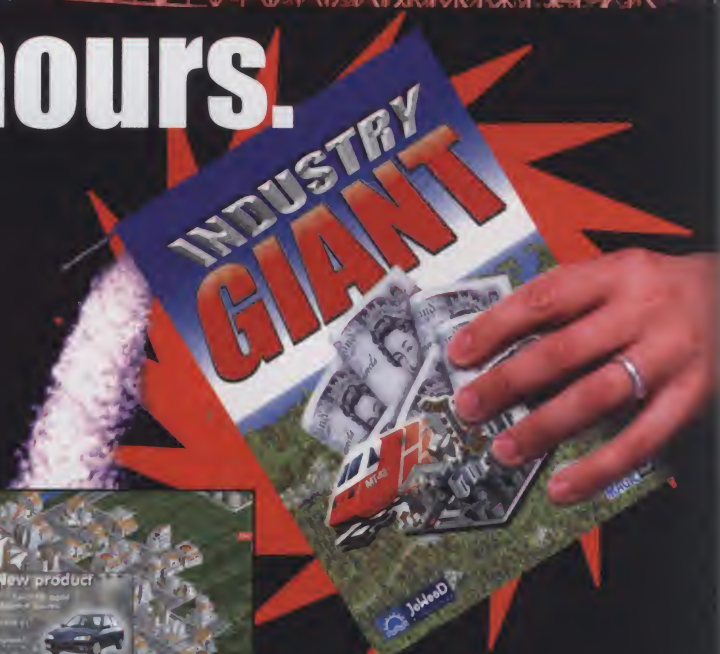
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REVIEW\$ EXTRA

After filling our reviews section to the point of bursting, here's the games we couldn't shoehorn in anywhere else



It's worms, Jim, but not as we know it.



The 3D is so good you can almost balance your pint on it.

ADDICTION PINBALL

★ £34.99 • MicroProse

PCZONE
RECOMMENDED
ON THE CD

Some people may think we need another pinball game like we need a sixth Spice Girl, a second Aqua album or a first Anthea

Turner. But not us. We like pinball – even if we originally came to it by mistake, thinking it was an S&M game involving an old oak table, some tacks and a claw hammer. At least there's a table.

Well, two tables, actually: Rally Fever and Worms (both named after MicroProse game offerings, in case you thought they were illnesses). The graphics are nice, with LED displays running at the top of each table and balls that reflect the backgrounds. And there are loads of different views, including a top-down view for those who refuse to let go of the past, a top-down sideways view for weirdoes, and one so close to the table you'd have to be a dwarf or an amputee to experience it in real life. Unlike in the *Pro Pinball* games, you can switch between them as you play. Although if you do, you'll probably lose your ball while the screen re-draws.

Rally Fever's the better table, but they're both good, with decent sound effects and plenty of 'stuff' to do. You don't get the same sense of immersion as the *Pro Pinball* games (still state of the art for sound), but you get two tables. Well worth shelling out for.

Patrick McCarthy

PCZVERDICT

83%



ALIEN EARTH

★ £34.99 • Funsoft

The date: the far future. The place: war-torn, alien-infested Earth. You are: Peter Andre. It seems science was right – only the simplest invertebrates will survive global apocalypse, including 10th-rate, antipodean swing merchants. *Alien Earth* is a point-and-click adventure with you taking the role of the aforementioned pop artiste (he's called Finn, but we recognised him straightaway). Earth has been battered by an all-out war and conquered by nasty aliens called the Raksha, who have reduced humanity to slavery. You must save the planet while being the prey for a Raksha 'hunt'.

This momentarily provides for a frisson of excitement – you've only got a short time, you're told, until the aliens turn up and stalk you. Unhappily, the game rapidly disintegrates into an aimless wander, shuffling the sprite around until you're finally able to click on the object you've spotted. Sometimes you meet people and clumsily click your way through key words, each of which sparks off a digitised sentence or two, but it all feels terribly mechanical. Combat is a simple matter of left-clicking on your target until they drop dead – hardly inspiring. Later, you join the Resistance and go on missions, which are a little more interesting, but the game is still let down by a clunky interface and dodgy collision-mapping.

Alien Earth never surprises. Some of the mutated beasties are nice, and the storyline is mildly enthralling, but nothing makes you sit up and take notice. *Fallout* (PCZ #61, 91%) is a similar game with a similar premise, but it's much slicker and better done.

Adam Taylor

PCZVERDICT

60%



ARCADE'S GREATEST HITS - THE MIDWAY COLLECTION 2

★ £29.99 • GT Interactive

Journey back with us to the early 1980s and visit the arcade time forgot, courtesy of Midway and *Arcade's Greatest Hits 2*. Here are seven games covering driving, shoot 'em ups and even a food fight. But beware: this is 1982, so you'll get better sound and graphics from your microwave.

To describe a retro collection in these terms alone is to miss the point. Part of the reason we play retro games is to remind us how awful graphics and sound used to be in the days when lens flare was a bad thing. The other reason is nostalgia – which is well covered.

These games are direct ports from arcade originals, so they're exactly how you remember them 16 years ago. Hang on a minute though... yes, I remember *Tapper* and *Joust 2*, and who could forget *Spy Hunter*? Then there's *Moon Patrol* and *Burger Time* – they ring a vague bell, but I've never heard of *Splat* or *Blaster*.

And that's the problem: this doesn't represent the golden age of arcade games at all. With the exception of *Spy Hunter*, these are the also-rans, and one or two are just plain pants. *Blaster* sold only 1,000 copies worldwide in its original arcade format, so it's not surprising if you don't remember it – it's hardly a 'greatest hit'.

If you played these games first time round and fancy a few hours harmless reminiscing, this is for you. But if, like the rest of us, you're too young, had a social life in the '80s, or have simply never heard of these titles, then I doubt this collection will work for you.

Roger Green

PCZVERDICT

48%



BUGRIDERS

★ £29.99 • GT Interactive

This surreal giant insect racer-cum-shoot 'em up is a port from the PlayStation. Developers nSpace have taken a pinch of *Wipeout* (PCZ #34, 78%), added a dash of *Slipstream 5000* (PCZ #27, 88%) and made giant flying insects the transport mode of choice. As with most PSX games, the general all-round presentation is very slick: 16 tracks, three play modes (Time trial, Exterminator and Campaign), up to eight-player link-ups, three skill levels and eight bizarre-looking 'jockeys' to choose from. The game engine is well greased, with lovely scenery zooming past, even without 3D acceleration (it's much better with). Sadly, all the lush visuals and gloss can't disguise the gameplay flaws beneath.

The main problem is that *Bugriders* has an identity crisis, not committing itself to being a racer (it's not fast enough) or a shoot 'em up (there's not enough to blast). The tracks, while pretty, seem too short, and being 'on rails' spoils the feel completely – sometimes you're steered all over the place, which makes for a nauseating ride.

Gripes aside, there are some inspired touches, such as having to beat the living daylights out of your chosen insect with your riding crop to speed it up, and the 'Aaak!' sound the insects emit as they scream in agony is hugely satisfying. The difficulty levels are well balanced so it's easy enough to get into the game.

Bugriders dares to be different in the often sterile world of PC racers, but ultimately suffers because the insects are a bugger to ride (ahem).

Kristan Reed

PCZVERDICT

69%

Plane Crazy is simple to pick up, but really hard to master - PC Zone

You would be Plane Crazy to buy another game - PC Format

The aerial race game for the insane!

Race the Crazy Aces over increasingly insane challenges...



Remember, fly low to get the good air



Collect the power-ups!



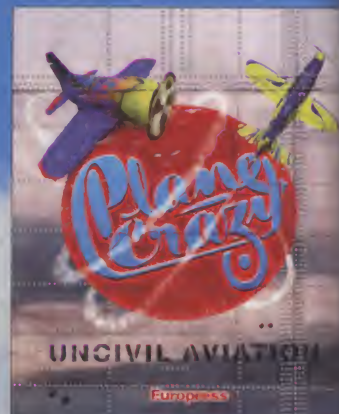
Available
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Comanche is now NovaWorld-compatible, so there's no excuse not to kick some American ass.



Like any good flight sim, *Comanche Gold* has external views. Use them, however, and you'll die. Very quickly.

COMANCHE GOLD

★ £29.99 • NovaLogic

PCZONE
RECOMMENDED



At the core of this release is the year-old 'copter sim

Comanche 3 (PCZ #51, 92%) – a fine game which offered a good balance between propeller-head realism and no-nonsense fun – although this is little more than an old game with a few extra missions bolted on. Less virtuous game publishers might have named it *Comanche 4*.

Of course, you *do* get extra missions – in fact there are over 80 in total now, including an all-new campaign designed by a former US Army Comanche Team Member. If that little lot doesn't keep you busy for a few long nights (and they will), you can always knock up your own with the new easy-to-use mission designer.

Tweaks elsewhere include improved wingman intelligence, new weather effects, a pre-mission weapons select option, and a simplified flight model facility for novices. And where the original was DOS-based, the new version is Windows 95

native (and optimised for MMX-based machines) – a switch which we'd guess took the boys at NovaLogic a little longer than five minutes.

There's still no support for 3D graphic accelerators though – NovaLogic's use of their own polygon-free Voxel Space 2 system makes this impossible – and while it does look excellent for a non-accelerated game, those with 3D cards would probably be better advised to look in the direction of EA's *Longbow 2* (PCZ #59, 92%) or *Team Apache* (see review on page 98). Already got *Comanche 3*? Then give NovaLogic a call – they're sorting out some kind of upgrade deal.

Incidentally, the Gold edition features built-in support for NovaWorld, NovaLogic's Net gaming front end first used for *F-22 Raptor*. Armed with a Net account, you're just a button-press away from kicking real Yankee ass for the cost of a local call. Tip: if you find them kicking *your* ass, use the chat function and mention something like, say, Vietnam. In cyberspace, words hurt a lot more than AIM-92 Stingers. **Warren Christmas**



IF-22 V.5

★ £29.99 • Interactive Magic

If you're a flight sim fan, you'll be hard-pressed to find anything but F-22 sims at the moment. For the past year or so, Lockheed Martin's big, expensive, not-finished-yet fighter has been by far the most popular subject for sims.

But you couldn't accuse Interactive Magic of bandwagon-jumping, since their *iF-22* (PCZ #55, 75%) was one of the first of these sims on the market. *iF-22 v.5* is a major upgrade, with better graphics, more campaign theatres, a virtual cockpit view and plenty of other fixes.

Unlike DiD's *F-22 ADF*, this comes with dynamic campaigns, which are considered essential for long-term playability, and single missions are also randomly generated so that no two are ever the same. The downside of this randomness is that it takes bloody ages (well, a minute or so) for each mission to be generated. Missions themselves are interesting though, and there's lots of emphasis on the stealth capabilities of the F-22. This means you get to sneak up on MiGs and blow them up before they know you're there. Nice.

Where *iF-22 v.5* compares badly to the competition is in its graphics. Although they have been improved in this version, they're still basic by today's standards. For starters, the planes look blocky and unrealistic. Next, effects are basic, with none of the translucent smoke and clouds we've come to expect. Finally, the frame rate is poor, even with a Voodoo2 card. To be honest, the graphics look almost as good without a 3D card. Obviously this is fine for those without extra hardware, but the benefits that a 3Dfx card brings to games like *F-15* (PCZ #64, 92%) and *F/A-18 Korea* (PCZ #61, 90%) mean that no self-respecting flight sim fan should be without one.

It's a shame that the graphics aren't up to much, because the rest of *iF-22* is pretty good. But nowadays, graphics are just too important a part of flight sims to really be able to recommend this.

Dave Mathieson



NBA HANG TIME

★ £29.99 • GT Interactive

Oh dear. A conversion of an arcade and console two-on-two basketball game. With an NBA licence, which in itself translates as 'Oh good, an existing market of fans. We don't need to put any effort into this one, lads.' Unfortunately, this one didn't bode at all well from the word go.

NBA Hang Time features graphics that you'd expect in a Megadrive game, plus uninteresting, uninspiring gameplay, and a ludicrously cumbersome control system (although admittedly it was set up on a machine with a keyboard and an analogue joystick, as opposed to the joypad recommended). And, to compound the irritation, absolutely everything in the game is done to a time limit. You have four minutes to work your way round the character creation screen, including the clumsy console-style method of entering names and numerical codes. At each quarter you have 10 seconds to confirm that, yes, you do want to continue the game you've started playing, and pressing the fire/shoot button just makes the countdown go faster.

If we were to attempt to find any redeeming features, we could mention the fact that when you create characters you can give them comedy heads, special features and have an almost RPG-like point allocation control over their attributes. We could mention that there are 150 top NBA players and more teams than we've heard of. We could mention that up to four people can play at once. We could mention the finger-twisting beat 'em up-style special moves Midway probably felt obliged to put in (though we couldn't find one to rip out your opponent's heart).

But none of these excuses the shoddy and unresponsive controls, the unimpressive graphics, the grey and boring manual, the uninspiring gameplay, and the fact that *NBA Hang Time* is just plain shite. Buy *NBA Live 98* (PCZ #60, 90%) instead. **Kat Necrochristi**

PCZ VERDICT

87%

PCZ VERDICT

65%

PCZ VERDICT

34%



ON THE BALL 2

★ £34.99 • Funsoft

Obvious as it may seem, football management games should be about football. That fact has been sadly lost on German developers Ascaron. Touted as an extremely in-depth approach to the (already crowded) management genre, what this actually means is that it's full of utterly pointless nonsense. Drugging the opposition, employing shady characters to injure rival players, and bribing the referee may sound hilarious while in marketing meetings, but in the cold light of day they add nothing to the game and are simply the concoctions of imbeciles.

There's more: a stock market, shares in other clubs, medical insurance, gambling, fan forums, stadium extensions, and even a quiz, failure at which can cost you your job. Anyone with the time and patience to use all the options in *On The Ball 2* would have to be either an insane hermit or serving a life sentence with access to neither a wireless nor pornography; and even then there's probably more fun to be had in daubing crude messages on the cell walls.

But it's not all good news. Ugly Windows menus, dreadful cartoony presentation and sub-David Hasselhoff soft rock combine to create one of the most aesthetically unpleasant games for many a year. It truly is wretched. For those who can grit

their teeth for long enough to get to the action, the matches are represented via some very

unremarkable animation and even more

awful, generic commentary.

Ironical xenophobia withstanding, Germans get a lot of things wrong – will there ever be a generation that renounces lederhosen? – and *On The Ball 2* is as wrong as they come.

Football fans will treat it with the contempt it deserves, and everyone else will neither know nor care.

Steve Hill



Lots of nice 3D-accelerated graphics...



...and the levels are challenging enough, but...



...It's the same old 'run, jump, fall over and die' formula.

PANDEMONIUM 2

★ £29.99 • Crystal Dynamics/Ubisoft

Sometimes, things aren't quite what they appear to be. Local newspaper headlines are a good example. In a craven attempt to boost circulation figures, provincial rags often run over-exaggerated headlines screaming from the front page; yet the actual story, lurking beneath the lurid block capitals, is usually the same old boring nonsense. One of the *Zone* hillbillies can clearly remember an incident when a minor Oxfordshire tabloid's arresting lead item – 'RIVER OF DEATH' – turned out to be an incredibly uninteresting story about sticklebacks (yes, sticklebacks) dying in a mildly polluted stream.

What's this got to do with *Pandemonium 2*? Well, like the aforementioned news reports, it's not as interesting as it first appears. It looks like an incredibly exciting 3D platform game, with graphics that are good enough to halt passers-by in their tracks. It's one of the growing legion of titles that requires an accelerator card, so expect to see it gleaming from a shop-window display near you soon.

Trouble is, while the graphics may be three-dimensional, the gameplay isn't. Despite appearances, it's first and foremost a two-dimensional platformer – just like old-skool *Sonic The Hedgehog*, etc. There's no true freedom of movement, just forwards, backwards and jump. Still, once you're accustomed to the controls it's not a bad platform game by any means. Get stuck in and you'll discover it's a fairly compulsive play. It's just that it isn't a particularly interesting one.

Charlie Brooker



TOTAL SOCCER

★ £19.95 • Live Media

Not so much a new game as a tribute to an earlier age – *I Can't Believe It's Not Sensible Soccer* would have been a more appropriate moniker, as *Total Soccer* borrows heavily from the top-down classic. That's a bold move in these heady days of motion-captured 3D extravaganzas, but Live Media aren't attempting to compete with the likes of the *Actua* or *FIFA* games, rather they are taking a back-to-basics approach.

Essentially a multimedia company, they started playing around with some graphics one lunchtime, and about a year later discovered they had inadvertently made a football game.

So what's it like? Well, if you erased from your mind all notions of *Sensi* or *Kick Off* and looked upon it with virgin eyes, you might be impressed by *Total*. Playing from top to bottom, or vice versa, your players run around like rabbits chasing a ping-pong ball. The pace of the game is initially bewildering, and gaining control of the ball takes some practice. Live Media have eschewed the 'sticky feet' concept in favour of a more realistic approach, so ludicrous George Weah-style dribbles are pretty much out of the question.

What you can do though is knock the ball around with some confidence, as the game boasts a pass button as well as a kick button, which can be used for punting the ball upfield or, ideally, into the net, with some spectacular goals scored as a matter of course. The addition of a pace button would have been good, but may have complicated matters. All Premiership teams are included (with real player names), as are a smattering of foreign sides, and a number of competitions can be set up.

Judged on its own merits, it's a fairly playable game, but you can pick up *SWOS* (PCZ #64, 70%) for a tenner. You pays your money, you makes your choice.

Steve Hill

★ Check out our football games round-up on page 100



X-MEN: THE RAVAGES OF APOCALYPSE

★ £19.99 • Marvel Interactive/GT Interactive

Not being a lifelong comic-collecting fan of Marvel, it was difficult to get excited about *X-Men* other than it being just another *Quake* total conversion. Compared with the excellent *Malice* (PCZ 80%), *X-Men* is a poor substitute, especially with the wealth of freely available conversions downloadable from the Net.

Basically, the story goes that the X-Men have been captured by the evil Apocalypse and are being used as templates for the cloning of a formidable army. As the pawn of the equally malevolent Magneto, your job is to build up a weapon strong enough to defeat Apocalypse and thwart his dastardly plans.

Leaving aside the ridiculous comic book story, the problem with *X-Men Quake* is that apart from one or two interesting ideas, it really is nothing special. With *Malice* you felt you were playing a different game; with *X-Men*, the worst aspect of the original game remains – namely that the single-player experience is too samey. The sense of foreboding in *Quake* is lost among a barrage of pastel colours, and playing the game on a 3D-accelerated machine the movement loses its fluidity.

The way in which your weapons morph is novel, but the weapons themselves feel underpowered, and your character really needs full health to survive the next encounter.

The multi-player game is actually very good, as you can choose your favourite X-Men, each possessing different abilities and powers, with which to do battle. Unfortunately, even with the included level designer there probably won't be enough people in the world to play against.

Fans of the comic book series might well see this game as essential, but in all honesty they won't be impressed. If you want to keep *Quake* alive, get a modem. Failing that, get *Malice*.

Richie Shoemaker

PCZ VERDICT

31%

PCZ VERDICT

69%

PCZ VERDICT

70%

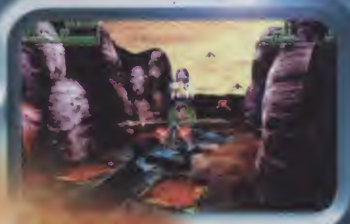
PCZ VERDICT

58%

WIPER

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BUDGETZONE

Time again to take the claw hammer to the little pink pig, count the shekels and raid the bargain bins. All the budget games reviewed here are now on sale in the shops

★ REVIEWED BY Richie Shoemaker



AFTERLIFE

★ £9.99 • Virgin (White Label) •

Reviewed: PCZ #40

The road to gaming nirvana does not run smoothly, especially in the case of *Afterlife*. Put simply: it's a God game – a genre conceived by Bullfrog (*Populous*) and leached by Maxis (*Sim Earth/Ant Farm/Despair* – ad nauseum). As Demiurge it's your job to manage the passing of souls through heaven and hell by creating punishment and reward zones, and making sure the realms of damnation and paradise are kept profitable. To help you along, you have a couple of advisors (an

angel and a demon) – who bring most of the humour to the game.

With the God game usurped in recent years by real-time strategy games, you might think it would be refreshing to go back to one that actually managed to be both original and funny. Not so. At least not to begin with. It really does take ages to get to grips with the concept of setting up zones, especially when the graphics just don't seem to quite fit in with what we'd usually perceive as heaven and hell.

Thankfully, the tutorials manage to aid more than they hinder, so once you've put in a few hours it all comes together. Like most of LucasArts' games, *Afterlife* is polished to a shine. Now if only it was just that little more accessible.

PCZVERDICT 72%



DARKLIGHT CONFLICT

★ £9.99 • EA Classics •

Reviewed: PCZ #50

When it comes to graphics, these chaps certainly know how to tickle our gaming G-spot. Responsible for the recent *Incoming* (PCZ #63, 90%), *Rage* have made it their trademark to produce graphics that not only attract the eye's attention, but also bombard it with over-the-top splendour and back up the whole thing with awesome sounds as well. If these guys ever made a porn flick, it would have only the most beautiful women, a script laden with vowels, and a pumping

soundtrack by The Orb. (*Whatever turns you on* – Ed.)

Consider *Darklight Conflict*, the aging space-combat equivalent of *Incoming*: the graphics are the best and fastest you'll see without the aid of a 3D accelerator card, and the sound is highly atmospheric without being distracting. On the downside, the storyline (captured by aliens... again) is far from inspired.

The long training missions that you have to pass to get into the meat of the game are exceedingly tedious, and only the embryonic feel of the music saves you from screaming. Eventually, when you get to the missions, the aliens are pretty predictable.

At the end of all this though, *Darklight* is tirelessly formulaic. It looks awesome, and it puts forward a convincing case for graphics being almost more important than gameplay – which is fair enough in this case.

PCZVERDICT 75%



JANE'S AH-64D LONGBOW

★ £9.99 • EA Classics •

Reviewed: PCZ #40

PCZONE CLASSIC

The great thing about flight sims is that more often than not you're given a manual that would put the Bible to shame. In *Longbow*'s case, you're almost getting your money's worth in spiral-bound paper alone. With the added weight of three CDs, this budget release offers awesome value for money, especially when the game itself is one of the best simulations ever seen.

To be perfectly honest, *Longbow* can be pretty heavy going, with realism the watchword here; the attention to

detail can be quite bewildering. And were it not for the fact that the tutorials are excellent, we'd have to reserve our recommendations only for the most serious sim fans. Fortunately, unless you're a shallow die-hard arcade fan you should get a lot out of this – if you put the time in.

Graphically, next to the recent sequel (PCZ #59, 92%), *Longbow* is starting to look a little rough around the edges, but at least it runs at a decent speed on a low-end PC. The choice is simple: if you want a great helicopter sim at a cheap price, then get this. To get any better you'd need to treble your investment.

PCZVERDICT 90%



KKND

★ £9.99 • EA Classics •

Reviewed: PCZ #48, 85%

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

While us Europeans predict a future blighted by over-urbanisation, the Australians, understandably enough, always go back to *Mad Max*. In *KKND*, the world has turned into barren desert and the only resource worth hoarding is oil. Basically, it's post-armageddon stuff, with war between the mutants and the technologically dependant neo-humans. A well-worn storyline indeed, and one that enables Oz developers Beam Software to turn their C&C wannabe into a game that, while full of action, is also lightly peppered with some genuinely amusing moments.

Everything in *KKND* is of a high quality. The maps are more interesting than in *C&C* and the graphics are just as detailed and colourful. The interface brings

CARMAGEDDON

★ £12.99 • Replay • Reviewed: PCZ #50

PCZONE CLASSIC

To call *Carmageddon* the driving equivalent of *Quake* is no understatement. As a racing game, it takes the best elements of *Destruction Derby* (PCZ #33, 90%) and mixes it up with a freedom of play that no other

driving game before or since has managed to equal. The crashes are spectacular, the car physics are awesome, all the tracks are different, and the game is just as much fun for the single player as it is for a bunch of real-life road ragers over a LAN.

To put it simply, *Carmageddon* enables you to play the game however you want to. You can race simply by following the trackside arrows in the hope you beat your rivals fair and square. Alternatively, you can try to win by destroying the other cars in a spectacular smash 'em up that makes the car chase in *The Blues Brothers* look like a cheap special effect. To top it all, *Carmageddon* dares to include pedestrians – not ones to avoid, mind, but ones to mount on your hood. Killing for cash. It isn't fuel that runs the cars, it's blood.

With superb graphics (even in low-res mode), almost infinite replayability and impressive AI, *Carma* was the last word in driving games. The fact that you all voted it the game of 1997 shows you how good it is. Buy it now, even if you've already got a copy – one to hand down to your kids when they come of age.

PCZVERDICT 95%



Carmageddon: not so much a game, more a way of life.

“Buy it now, even if you've already got a copy – one to hand down to your kids...”

PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING

£12.99 • EA Classics • Reviewed: PCZ #44

**PCZONE
CLASSIC**

Admittedly, this one's been on the shelves for quite a while now, but it has to be said that *Privateer 2* is still the best *Wing Commander* game yet; even, dare we say, the best space combat/trading game available at the moment.

For anyone who's yet to sample the delights of the successful series, this is probably the perfect place to make your introductions. For one thing, it's incredibly easy to get into, and once underway unravels into an epic adventure that brings in the best elements of both *Elite* and *WC: I-V*.



Still the best *Wing Commander* game to date.

Starting off knowing only your name and that you look uncannily like Clive Owen, it's off to discover some home truths and hopefully build up your pathetic ship by trading, bounty hunting and smuggling – hobnobbing with the likes of Christopher Walken and Jurgen Prochnev along the way, of course.

The acting and sets are of a very high quality even by today's standards, and the overall presentation is stunning. Hours can

be lost just going through the databases and public records. Once you get flying it's even better. Okay, so there's no 3D acceleration, but still the graphics are impressive, the explosions cool, and all the ships are intensely detailed. If we had to dredge up a bad point it would be that for hardened space combaters it may all start off a bit too easy. However, anyone with even a smidgen of interest in anything related to space combat should have this in their collection – in other words, everyone.

PCZVERDICT

92%

“Anyone with even a smidgen of interest in anything related to space combat should have this in their collection”

Now in spinney 3D-o-vision, *Syndicate Wars* picked up from where Bullfrog's 1993 original left off: namely with you in control of the world, trying desperately to hang on to it. In essence, you control a squad of four cybernetically enhanced killing machines through a series of missions that invariably involve killing an obscene number of people. In between each mission, you can research new equipment and allocate resources to make sure you stay above the competition.

Gameplay-wise, *Syndicate Wars* is almost faultless. Its violence can almost take on *Carnageddon* proportions as bodies slump under the weight of fire. Once you get hold of some of the later weapons, the game turns into a display of pyrotechnics that should satiate even the most bloodthirsty of gamers.

There are a few problems with enemy cyborgs being able to shoot you from off the screen, but apart from that, the gameplay still shines as bright as ever. Love it.

PCZVERDICT

82%



some great touches that make more of the map available on-screen, rather than having a third of it covered by icons.

As a no-holds-barred direct copy of *C&C*, there's nothing that you wouldn't find elsewhere. But if you want more of the same at a fraction of the price, grab a copy of *KKND*.

PCZVERDICT

82%



MASTER OF ORION II

£9.99 • MicroProse • Reviewed: PCZ #45

**PCZONE
RECOMMENDED**

Like Marmite, *Master Of Orion II* (or *MOO2* to us acronymous types) is a game that you'll either love or hate. It's a turn-based, sci-fi strategy game where, as the autonomous leader

of a race of your choice, you must triumph over all the backstabbing peoples that inhabit the spiral arm of the galaxy we now reside in. Comparable in scope to *Civilization* (PCZ #36, 90%), it combines elements of combat, research and diplomacy in a game requiring a huge investment of time to get anywhere.

If this sounds like your kind of thing then you'll be pleased to know that, apart from the dated graphics, the game is incredibly addictive, almost to the point of frustration. As you get further and further into *MOO2*, more avenues open up and there are many directions in which to take your fledgling empire. You can be a nasty and secretive leader, barbaric or take the technologically enlightened route.

Make no mistake about it, *MOO2* will try to take over your life. If you try to fight it then you'll lose the plot. If you're not prepared to give it your all then don't even touch it. All or nothing – that's this game's motto.

PCZVERDICT

88%



7TH LEGION

£9.99 • MicroProse • Reviewed: PCZ #57

As *C&C* clones go, *7th Legion* is innovative and flawed in equal measure. It's a simple affair, with the standard two sides and none of the strategic bells and whistles that characterise the likes of *Dark Reign* (PCZ #56, 89%) or *TA* (PCZ #56, 92%). In fact, there's no resource management either; all you have to worry about is spending a preset number of credits. What's different about *7th Legion* is the introduction of battle cards that you 'play' like jokers in the style of *It's A Knockout*. Imagine playing *C&C* and suddenly clicking on an icon that switches all the enemy infantry to your side. Sounds good until you realise that the enemy can do the same to you. Ouch.

Barely six months old, *7th Legion* is a more attractive game

than most. With a wide variety of units, the graphics are detailed and resplendent with colour. What lets the whole package down is the route-finding and AI – quite possibly the worst seen in a game of this type. For a tenner, though, this is pretty good value.

PCZVERDICT

70%



SYNDICATE WARS

£12.99 • EA Classics • Reviewed: PCZ #43

**PCZONE
RECOMMENDED**

Yuck. There's nothing quite so despairing as going back to a game that was your absolute favourite for months on end, only to find that the 3D graphics that once had you screeching like a five-year-old have dated faster than a pair of legwarmers. The cityscapes still look good, but the bitmapped characters are now pretty ugly.

£14.99 • GT Interactive • Reviewed: PCZ #42

**PCZONE
RECOMMENDED**

To call *Z* a *C&C* clone is a tad harsh. Okay, so you still have to point-and-click to send your troops to their death, but the entire feel of the game is subtly different so as to appeal to anyone sick to the back teeth of the usual formula of creating bases and armies.

All the buildings are already in place, with one in each territory. You have to capture each territory to gain access to its resources and therefore acquire the ability to produce more units quickly.

The action is more strategic than *C&C* ever was, even though line of sight or terrain have little tactical value. It's fast, fun and hard going, and with the Expansion kit also included, it adds up to a pretty impressive pack. However, if you prefer the *C&C* style, go for *KKND*.

PCZVERDICT

80%

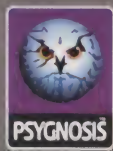
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WINDOWS ON



Ⓢ Carmageddon II on Win 98 – the wrong kind of crashes?

TECH SPECS



Win98 requires a 66MHz 486DX PC (or faster), at least 16Mb RAM, 120Mb to 295Mb (195Mb is 'typical'), a CD-ROM or DVD-ROM drive, VGA or better display and a Windows-compatible pointing device

The latest version of Windows is due on Thursday 25 June, but is it worth splashing out on? *Warren Christmas* investigates

You may have hated it at the time – indeed, you may still hate it – but when Win95 was released three years ago it was a major step forward for the computer industry. Along with updates such as DirectX, it created a relatively stable platform for game developers to work with, and has enabled rapid advancement in hardware technology in areas such as 3D graphics, digital control and, more recently, audio acceleration. The benefit to you, the home user, should be obvious every time you effortlessly install a new game. Well, most of the time.

Windows 98, which is due to go on sale on Thursday 25 June, is the latest stage in the Windows development and – although Microsoft won't yet confirm the fact – it's likely to be the last version that will run both 16- and 32-bit software, including DOS titles. The next big release, which is

undoubtedly some time off, will be a true 32-bit operating system, with core elements from Windows NT, currently used in high-end business environment.

WHAT'S NEW?

The new version offers enhanced performance and reliability, improved hardware support and much tighter integration with Net software (see Windows 98 At A Glance panel, p124) – and, for the record, it's completely compatible with Win95 software and drivers. However, it is not a revolutionary step forwards to the same degree as the jump from DOS and Win3.xx to Win95 was. This is borne out by the fact that if you upgrade to 98 from 95, the version number jumps from version 4.0 to just 4.1.

Indeed, many of the 'new' features in Win98 have already been introduced through revisions of Win95 called OEM Service Releases (OSRs) versions 1, 2 and 2.1. These have been installed on new machines by PC vendors over the last couple

“There are few reasons for you to rush out and spend £160-odd on Windows 98 (or around £85 for the upgrade version) the minute it hits the stores... Indeed, if our reader comments are anything to go by, few of you will”

of years, and include extra drivers, bug fixes and components.

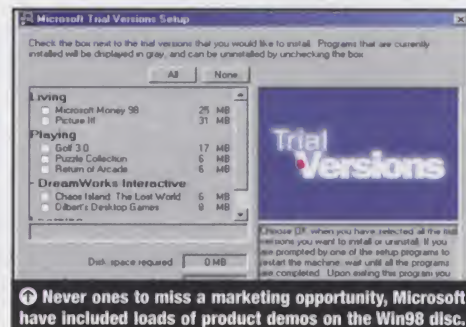
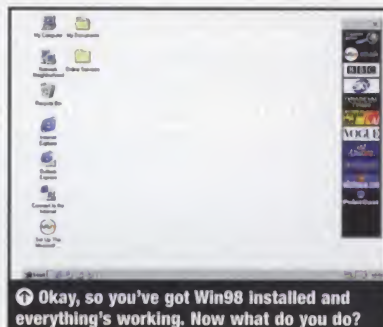
Other features have been introduced since 1995 through updates and drivers such as the Service Packs and DirectX 5.0, while the 'big change', the Active Desktop, can be seen by Win95 users who install Internet Explorer 4.0. It's worth keeping in mind that you can install these – including IE 4.0 – for free via the Download section of Microsoft's website (www.microsoft.com) or from the cover discs of PC Zone.

Given this, and the fact that no software actually *requires* Windows 98 right now – and won't for a while yet – there are few reasons for you to rush out and spend £160-odd on Windows 98 (or around £85 for the upgrade version) the minute it hits the stores. Indeed, if our reader comments (see What You Think panel, p125) are anything to go by, few of you will.

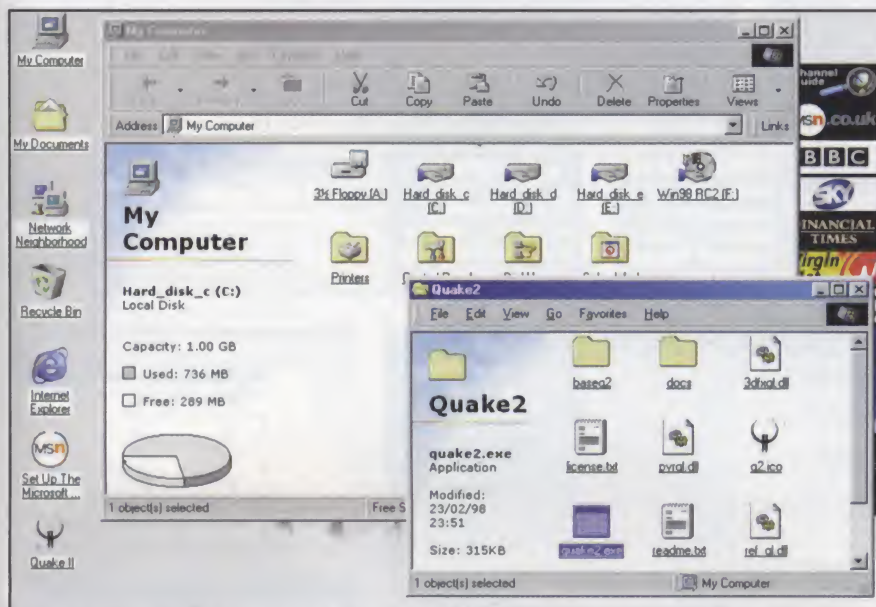
Buy a new PC from today onwards, however, and you won't be able to avoid it – although that's no bad thing. Give it a year or so and we'll *all* be using Win98. Gates is an appropriate name for the chief of the Seattle-based company – there is seemingly no escape from Fortress Microsoft.

COME TO WINDOWS 98

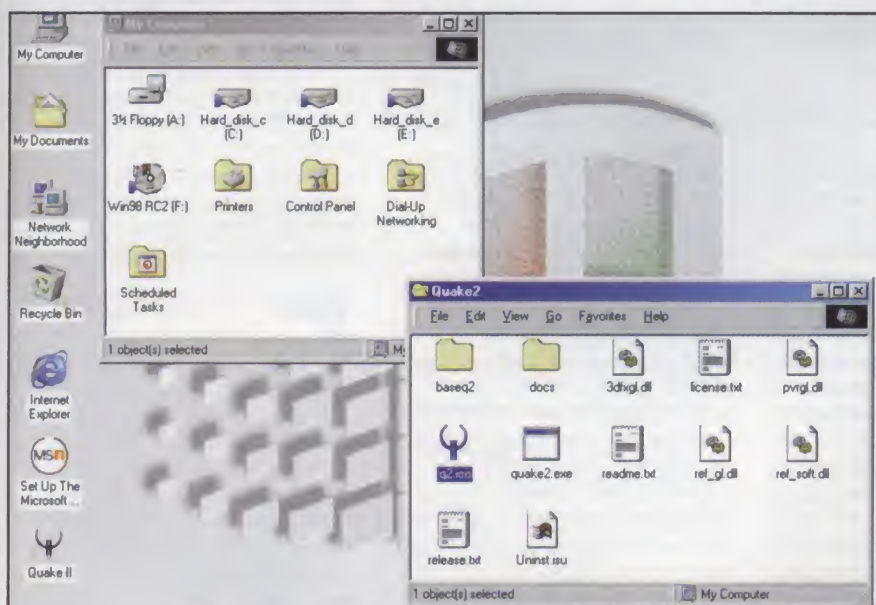
Ⓢ Win98's fluffy new welcome screen includes an option to register on-line. Software pirates probably won't want to use this feature.



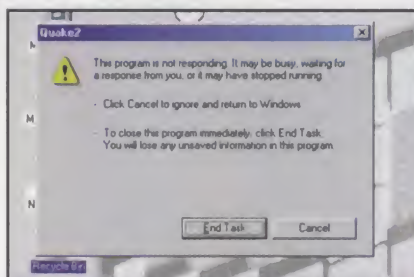
THE WORLD



If you haven't used it before, the Active Desktop Web browser-style interface can seem a little weird...



...but if you don't like it, a few clicks will get you back to the more recognisable Win95-style interface.



Win98 should be more reliable than Win95. But some things never change, do they?



You won't see too much of the shutdown screen - Win98 can close down much faster than Win95.



BILL V THE REST OF THE WORLD

You're probably aware that Microsoft are fighting with US regulators - but just what the hell is going on? *Sarah Kinder* explains

It's no secret that Microsoft are in legal hot water with the US Department of Justice (DoJ). The launch of Windows 98 has outraged US regulators and seen Microsoft slapped with the biggest anti-trust suit in American history.

It's not the first time Bill Gates has clashed heads with US regulators. In 1991 the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) took Microsoft on over claims that the company was monopolising the desktop operating system market. But the FTC couldn't agree on a formal complaint, and the case was dropped.

In 1993 the DoJ and the European Commission began their own complaints procedures. A year later, Microsoft signed a consent decree amending their contracts with PC manufacturers, and the Europeans bowed out of the fight. Then Win95 came along and Microsoft had their wrists slapped for putting their own on-line service, the Microsoft Network, exclusively on the desktop. Eventually, the company included an on-line folder offering rival on-line services such as CompuServe. Also launched in 1995 was the company's *Internet Explorer 2*, the first free version of the browser released to fend off competition from *Netscape Navigator*.

And that brings us to Win98. Microsoft's decision to bundle *Internet Explorer* browser free with the operating system outraged US officials, who claim that Microsoft have revoked on their 1994 anti-trust deal. Previously, the company promised not to use its dominance in the operating system market to push other Microsoft products... such as *Internet Explorer*.

What makes this case different is that this time it looks like the DoJ is going to go all the way. After an initial truce, and a brief delay on the shipment of Win98 to PC manufacturers, Microsoft have gone ahead with the planned roll-out of the operating system, kicking off what could be a long and tedious fight in the courts.

On May 18, the DoJ finally filed its anti-trust complaint. "Microsoft used their monopoly power to develop a chokehold on the browser software needed to access the Internet," says US Attorney General Janet Reno. And that leaves Windows 98 and Microsoft facing an uncertain future.

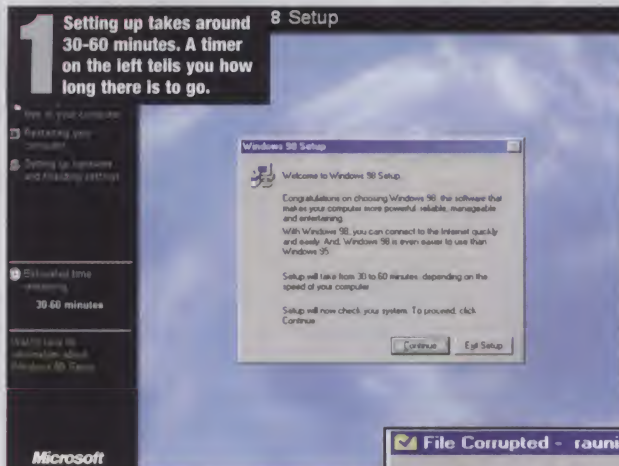
Speculation over the possible outcomes of the case have been rife. One of the more popular theories surrounds the possibility of a Microsoft split, with the DoJ breaking the company down into, for example, separate divisions for operating systems and applications. Other theories see Microsoft subject to the same strict regulation as utilities such as gas, electricity and telephone companies. That would mean Microsoft's pricing structure coming under strict scrutiny in the future.

Alternatively, the two parties could reach a compromise based on the way Microsoft present their *Internet Explorer* browser to the end user. For example, the inclusion of another browser folder that would put rival *Netscape Navigator* on the Microsoft desktop, or allowing end users to create their own customised interface instead of having to use the Microsoft proprietary screen.

One thing is certain, though: neither side is going to give up without a fight. Expect it go the full 12 rounds.

Sarah Kinder is News Editor of PC Pro, Britain's leading business-oriented PC magazine.

WINDOWS 98 AT A GLANCE



A brief guide to the main new features of Windows 98

1 EASY INSTALL

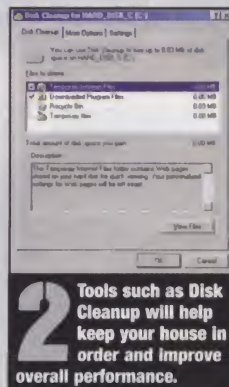
Upgrading from Windows 95 to Windows 98 takes 30-60 minutes (it took 50 minutes on our P133 test machine). You need to confirm the licence agreement, enter a Product Key number, decide whether to back up your existing Win95/DOS files, enter country details and insert a blank floppy to create a start-up disk. The rest of the install process is fully automated (it even restarts the machine automatically), so when you're told to "Sit back and relax" you can actually go and do something else.

Crucially, comprehensive hardware support and backwards compatibility means that everything should work first time (it did in our tests) – a far cry from the Win95 upgrade. The bad news? You'll need anything from 120Mb to 295Mb of spare hard disk space. Our PC had 321Mb spare hard disk space before installing Win98 and just 141Mb afterwards, although switching to FAT32 (see below) eventually left us with 302Mb.

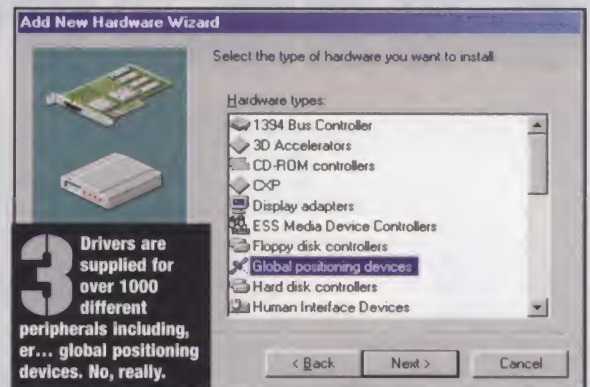
2 IMPROVED PERFORMANCE

Microsoft have rewritten a large amount of the operating system's core code which, through improved memory management and disk access, should bring you performance improvements in various areas, including faster boot-up and shutdown times (although our ageing test system, which initially had very little software installed, actually took a few seconds longer to start up with Win98).

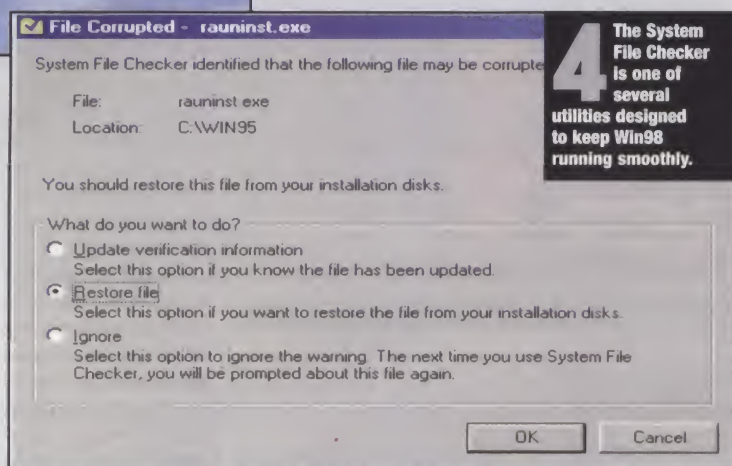
The new Application Launch Accelerator helps speed up software launch times, while the (revamped) Defrag and Disk Cleanup utilities (which helps you to



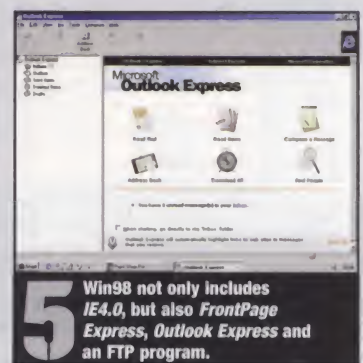
2 Tools such as Disk Cleanup will help keep your house in order and improve overall performance.



3 Drivers are supplied for over 1000 different peripherals including, er... global positioning devices. No, really.



4 The System File Checker is one of several utilities designed to keep Win98 running smoothly.



5 Win98 not only includes IE4.0, but also FrontPage Express, Outlook Express and an FTP program.

There's now less of an excuse for losing valuable data, with Win98's smart new Backup utility supporting a wide range of devices, including Zip drives. Should you completely lose access to Win98, System Recovery enables you to boot from your Win98 Start-up floppy disk and guides you through restoration with a software wizard.

5 NET INTEGRATION

Win98 includes the option (note: option) to use the Active Desktop (as featured in Internet Explorer 4.0) rather than the more familiar Win95-style interface. This makes using your computer much like surfing the Web, complete with single-click application start, customisable toolbars and forward/backwards operations. Whether you find this an easier way to navigate is down to personal preference, although the chances are that you probably will come to like it when you get used to it.

As for the Net itself, Internet Explorer 4.0 is, of course, now an integral part of the operating system, although there's nothing to stop you installing Netscape Navigator as well. Don't expect miracles, but you may find that connection to the Net – and, therefore, multi-player gaming – is faster and more reliable thanks to improvements to the TCP/IP stack (which recovers and re-transmits lost data quicker). Meanwhile, Dial-Up Networking can support direct connection from one Win98 PC to another, as well as multiple modems working simultaneously from a single machine.

remove unneeded files) will offer performance benefits though hard disk maintenance.

You can also easily convert from the inefficient 16-bit file system (used for DOS and the original version of Win95) to FAT32, a 32-bit mode (introduced in Win95 OSR2) which supports drives above the previous 2Gb limit and, for reasons too complex to explain here, can free up as much as 25% of your hard disk space.

Incidentally, DirectX (version 5.0, but soon to be upgraded to 6.0) is now built into Windows, rather than bolted on top. This is likely to bring enhanced stability, but not necessarily increased performance. Tests with *Quake II*, for example, showed no benefit (we'll report more on the state of play with DirectX next issue).

3 EXTRA HARDWARE SUPPORT

Windows 98 includes support for more than 1000 different peripherals and will, of course, update your existing hardware drivers. Beyond this, the Windows Update Wizard can scan your PC, search the Internet for the latest patches and driver revisions, and then install them automatically.

Support has now been built-in for the various technologies that have emerged since Win95 was originally released,

including MMX processors, Accelerated Graphics Port (AGP) graphics cards, DVD-ROM drives, Force-Feedback joysticks, infrared control and Universal Serial Bus (USB) peripherals.

Expect hardware manufacturers to now take full advantage of the latter – communication technology which enables up to 127 control devices and other peripherals (such as digital cameras) to be daisy-chained and installed on-the-fly. Support is also included for IEEE 1394 (FireWire), a similar system designed for devices such as scanners and camcorders which need higher bandwidth. Incidentally, Win98 can also support multiple graphics cards for independent displays across more than one monitor.

4 MORE RELIABLE

Microsoft claim that Win98 is more stable than Win95 and, with direct support for more hardware, that this should make it less prone to crashing. We didn't experience any problems during testing, but only time will tell just how reliable it is.

The System File and Registry Checkers should help maintenance. The former alerts you when a critical file has been changed (and gives you the option to restore the original), and can track any file – not just system files – while the latter cleans and backs up your Registry.



DAVID WEEKS

The Windows 98 product manager at Microsoft UK, answers PC Zone's questions

PCZ Why should a PC Zone reader upgrade to Windows 98?

DAVID PC gamers want pulse-pounding, palm-sweating, super-realistic action. Windows 98 delivers exactly that, adding support for high-performance 3D graphics, true positional surround-sound, and Force-Feedback joysticks – the kind that shake or shudder. Win98 also provides the challenge of multi-player gaming, as its reliable Internet functionality enables better connections with other gamers, whether directly or through an on-line gaming service. Windows 98 includes DirectX 5 and will support DirectX 6 games, further boosting the quality and realism of gaming on the PC. Furthermore, Windows 98 offers simplified set-up of all leading multimedia-related hardware.

PCZ Why is Win98 so expensive?

DAVID Microsoft do not set the price of their software, it is a market-led thing.

PCZ When are we likely to see Win98-native games being released?

DAVID I think we will see games released which are enhanced for Windows 98 that take advantage of some of the key features within the product – for example, Multi-Monitor and DVD. We have a team of DirectX evangelists working with games developers to bring games with these capabilities to market as soon as possible.

PCZ Why isn't DirectX 6 included in the release version of Win98? That is, why didn't Microsoft delay Win98 until DirectX 6.0 was ready? The implication is that Microsoft don't really care about the gaming community.

DAVID DirectX 6 has only just gone into beta. Microsoft have to take account of customer demand and OEM deadlines when releasing software. Had they waited for DirectX 6 to launch, the knock-on effect to Microsoft's partners would be considerable. Gamers are an extremely important audience to Microsoft, and DirectX 5 is fully supported in Windows 98. When DirectX 6 is released, products developed using its technology will be compatible with Windows 98.

For developers, there is improved consistency among the APIs, and – because of the new Win32 API Driver Model (WDM) – the DirectX APIs are now the same for both Windows 98 and Windows NT 5.0, as well as Windows 95. In addition, DirectX 6 is backward-compatible, so applications developed for DirectX 5, or even version 3, will run without hardware compatibility issues.

PCZ Will this be the last version of Windows as we know it? That is, will the next version be a Win/WinNT hybrid?

DAVID Microsoft have not made any decisions on this yet.



“I will install it the second it's out, but I avoid betas like the plague”

DAVID PERRY, SHINY ENTERTAINMENT



“Win98-native? What would that mean? Multi-monitor, I suppose. Nothing we are doing will support it at the moment”

GLENN CORPES, BULLFROG

“All that will happen is a lot of creative focus will have to be wasted just figuring out how to get the f*ing PC to work properly”**

JON HARE,
SENSIBLE
SOFTWARE



WHAT THE GAMES INDUSTRY THINKS

We asked some major game developers what they personally think of Win98. Will they be installing it? Have they got Win98-native titles in the pipeline?

① “We’re hoping Win98 continues Microsoft’s move towards Windows NT. We view NT as a far more stable and powerful OS than Win95, and as home systems increase in power, this is fast becoming a practical solution”

Richard Groves, Pure Entertainment

② “At least Win98 with DirectX 6.0 also installed has a good chance of supporting and pushing all the latest protocols. I will install it the second it's out, but I avoid betas like the plague”

David Perry, Shiny Entertainment

③ “Win98-native? What would that mean? Multi-monitor, I suppose. Nothing we are doing will support it at the moment. As far as I’m concerned, the best thing about it will be the built-in DirectX – this *should* make support easier for us”

Glenn Corpes, Bullfrog

④ “I’ve not seen it actually running. But we have one of those weird, halfway versions (Win96.5?) which has IE4 infested into everything you want to do... and we hate it. It’s something more to get angry about, and we might buy a Mac soon. We’ve had enough. We can’t take it any more”

Archer Maclean, Awesome

⑤ “I think Win98 is probably going to end up being yet another load of incompatible shit for us developers to have to contend with... Of course, we will have to start working with Win98 in mind... We will be given little choice, and all that will happen is a lot of creative focus will have to be wasted just figuring out how to get the f***ing PC to work properly”

Jon Hare, Sensible Software

WHAT YOU THINK

What do PC Zone readers think of Win98? We asked for opinions via the chat forum on our website. Here are some of the responses

⑥ “I have been beta testing Win98, and from what I can see it's just Win95 with bug fixes and IE4 tagged on. There are no radical increases in speed, and the interface is very similar, though it is a bit more user friendly. There is one good feature, though, and that is the system optimisation, where Windows looks for old files to delete, and attempts to make the computer run at peak performance”

Gary Ambrose

“Hopefully, Win98 won't replace 95 as the gaming platform. I wonder if Microsoft will pay developers to switch?”

JASON MORGAN

⑦ “From my experience, it's just Win95 with a few extra bits on that iron out the problems that were bloody annoying in Win95. The one click to open folders and execute programs is a welcome addition, but other than little things like that I can see no clear difference”

Andrew Kimberley

⑧ “I’m not going to upgrade to Win98 any time soon. In fact, I’ll only consider it when there is a real gaming need to. Developers won’t make games to run specifically on it for ages, as they’ll lose too much revenue from non-upgraders. Also, if Microsoft’s bloatware policy continues, the new OS will just leave me with less physical memory than before. Where’s the sense in that?”

Pap Taylor

⑨ “I’ll upgrade when it becomes essential in order to play good games, much like I did with Win95. Hopefully, Win98 won’t replace 95 as the gaming platform. I wonder if Microsoft will pay developers to switch?”

Jason Morgan

⑩ Got something to say on Win98? E-mail us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk or write to us at the usual address.

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★ ANSWERED BY Warren Christmas

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FAT LAG

Q In the last issue of *Zone*, you said that there will be no performance increase playing games over the Net with a 56K modem, with *Quake* given as an example. It may be useful for other readers to know that 56K modems (using the Kflex standard – a lot better for games than X2) will give a very noticeable difference, knocking about a third off your ping (delay) times. In *Quake* (using a half-decent ISP) you should expect a ping of about 190ms–220ms. With my Pace 56K modem, I get consistent ping times of 110ms–140ms.

Phil Mansell, e-mail

A Sorry, but to suggest that upgrading from an, er – well, you don't actually specify a speed to compare against – to a 56K modem will knock about "a third

off your *Quake* ping times" is, quite obviously, complete and utter bollocks. And we're not sure what evidence you have to suggest that the Kflex standard is better for games than X2 (which is kind of immaterial with V.90, the true standard, taking over anyway).

True, under the right conditions a 56K modem can – sometimes – offer some speed improvements over, say, a 33.6K modem when playing Net-based games. For every user that reports a speed-up with a game such as *Quake*, however, you'll find someone else who finds no performance benefit whatsoever.

The bottom line is that it's important that PC gamers don't see 56K modems as some kind of miracle cure for the inherent problems of Net latency. Because they're not.

If you haven't got a modem, then sure, get a 56K model (making sure it supports the V.90 standard) – given the current price differential, it's really not worth buying anything else. If you've already got a half-decent model, however, your upgrade budget could probably be used better elsewhere.

YEAH, RIGHT

Q Since getting my new 233MHz Pentium II with... [Paul thoughtfully lists every last piece of hardware, right down to type of memory], I've had an absolute nightmare trying to run some games. I was told by the company I bought the machine from that the problems I am encountering are "Probably caused by the software you are running – after all, Pentium II technology is very new and the game designers won't have accounted for it".

I don't understand this argument, as *Quake II* and *Incoming* run fine, but *Ultimate Race Pro*, *Actua Soccer 2*, *TOCA Touring Car* and *G-Police* all crash, either on set-up or when I first get into the game. On the odd occasion I actually get to run a game, it crashes after a short while – for example, after completing a mission, when the game is updating. I never had this problem with my old Pentium 166MMX.

Is what the supplier told me true, or am I being fobbed off? And why haven't Intel warned people that these chips are not backwardly compatible with games? After all, most of the games are still in the charts.

Paul Moore, e-mail

A Er, Intel haven't issued a warning because there's nothing to warn people about – there are no compatibility problems between the Pentium and Pentium II processors.

You've definitely got a major hardware problem here. The symptoms suggest that you've

TIP-TASTIC MATE

Just a quick note that may be of interest to your readers. Myself and a lot of others have experienced problems running *Quake II* on-line when using a 3Dfx Voodoo 2-based accelerator. The problem being ping times of 1500ms! But, fear not, I have found the cure. From the *Quake II* command console, type 'rate 2000' then 'cl_maxfps 30'. Happy fragging!

Darren (aka BadBoy666), e-mail

got a bugged hard drive, although you may well have some driver problems, too.

You're well within your rights to insist that the supplier fixes the machine under the terms of the warranty. If they don't fix it, take 'em to court. If you can't afford a solicitor, try the BBC's *Watchdog*. Hey, you might even get to meet that nice (but smug) Alice Beer. The short answer is: yes, you're being fobbed off.

YES, WE KNOW

Q There's a little error in the last issue of *PC Zone* (May 1998). In the Tech Zone section (page 127), you describe the Creative Labs Voodoo 2 card while showing a picture of the Diamond model. Oops! Great mag – thought I'd be piccy though. Get it? Sorry...

Rich Palmer, e-mail

A Yes, thanks for pointing that out. We hardly think it was Crime of the Century, though – given that the boards are practically identical, er... bar the name written clearly down the side (art department, take note). Incidentally, Rich, there was a typo in your e-mail. And your joke was really crap. And you don't win £50. Cheers! ☺

A QUICK FAQ

Gamepads come under the spotlight

★ How come I can only get two buttons to work on each controller when I use both of my Gravis PC GamePads together?

A standard PC joystick port can support one or two analogue controllers with a total of four buttons – either four on a single controller or, with two controllers connected via a splitter cable/box, two on each. Simple as that.

★ Okay... but how come my mate's Microsoft SideWinder gamepad has 11 different buttons which can all be used, no matter how many of the things he has connected?

Ah, that's because SideWinders are digital devices.

★ Analogue? Digital? Do what?

Traditional analogue controllers are fine where precise control is needed – in flight sims and racing games, for example – because they accurately relay subtle changes in movement. They're hopeless for fast-action games, though, where the processor simply needs to know whether you're pressing up, down, left, right or whatever. Microsoft built support for digital controllers into DirectX, paving the way for a new breed of console-style gamepads with multiple buttons, that can easily be daisy-chained and negate the need for tedious calibration.

★ So who, aside from Microsoft, make digital gamepads? Every major manufacturer in the field, including big guns such as ThrustMaster, CH Products and Gravis. There are a lot of models to choose from, and we'll be rounding them up in a big review in due course.

★ Can I just buy one and plug it straight in?

Yes. PC joystick ports are usually built into sound cards and we haven't come across one that doesn't support digital controllers. You may have problems with some very, very old boards, but it's unlikely.

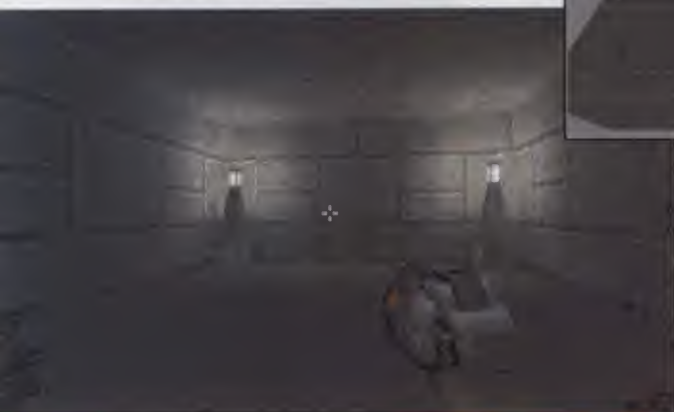
© Fifty quid, actual size (more or less). And you could win it!

HOW TO... BUILD A QUAKE LEVEL

“Continuity. Attention to detail. A decent sense of scale. Good lighting. A nice layout. A few surprises. Something new”

RICH CALSON, ION STORM

Explore the world of level design and learn how to turn a grey blob (right) into, er, an empty room (below).



PART ONE

You know what it's like. It's Sunday. No footie or *Simpsons* on the telly. You're bored and your Pentium 166 ultimate games machine lies dormant in the corner. It's at times like these you wish someone would explain to you something like... well, something like how to build a *Quake* level, for instance

★ ÜBERFRAGMEISTER David McCandless

BUILDING SITES

Homes from home for the *Quake* level constructor

www.gamespot.co.uk/pc/gamespot/features/3d_design

Good feature on level design

www.planetquake.com/tdan/top50.htm Top 50 *Quake* levels

quakemecca.simplenet.com/top100.html Top 100 levels of all time

www.planetquake.com/lotus/top5.htm Best new *Quake II* levels

www.bshq.com The excellent BSP homepage

www.planetquake.com/editing/ Huge load of links for editing

THE JARGON

- ★ **Brush** A solid shape in a 3D game, be it box, crate, wall or rock. A room starts off as a single solid brush. When hollowed out, it becomes six brushes (one for each wall).
- ★ **Entities** The objects in the game. Monsters, ammo crates, health kits, lights and start positions are all entities.
- ★ **Textures** Er, doh. Textures are materials pasted onto brushes to make them look real.
- ★ **Map** A level.
- ★ **Carving** Slicing off parts of a brush to form another shape. For instance, you would carve the top of a door to make it into an arch.

The level design is, in essence, everything – the man, boy, lover and father of a game. The level designers is not just the set designer but the painter, lighting man, director of pace, and engineer. They place the monsters so you get scared, then place the weapons so you can momentarily stop being scared. They ready the traps that have you unceremoniously clubbed into a 40-foot lava pit. They stick the carpets and rivets and wood work on the walls to make everything look interesting, and they light the caverns so that your bladder knows to tighten.

Crap levels will destroy a game – no matter how wazzy or spiffing the graphics and engine are. Thousands of people have built their own

maps, using the hundreds of tools and resources out there. Some talented numbers have even been noticed and snapped up by a hungry game industry. Now they design games all day and get paid many dollars for the privilege.

Beware, though – it's not that easy. Level

design comes with its own special brand of jargon (to wit: brushes, prefabs, carving), and its own complexities. No level design package can be mastered totally in a day. No great level ever took less than a week to make. But if you really want to

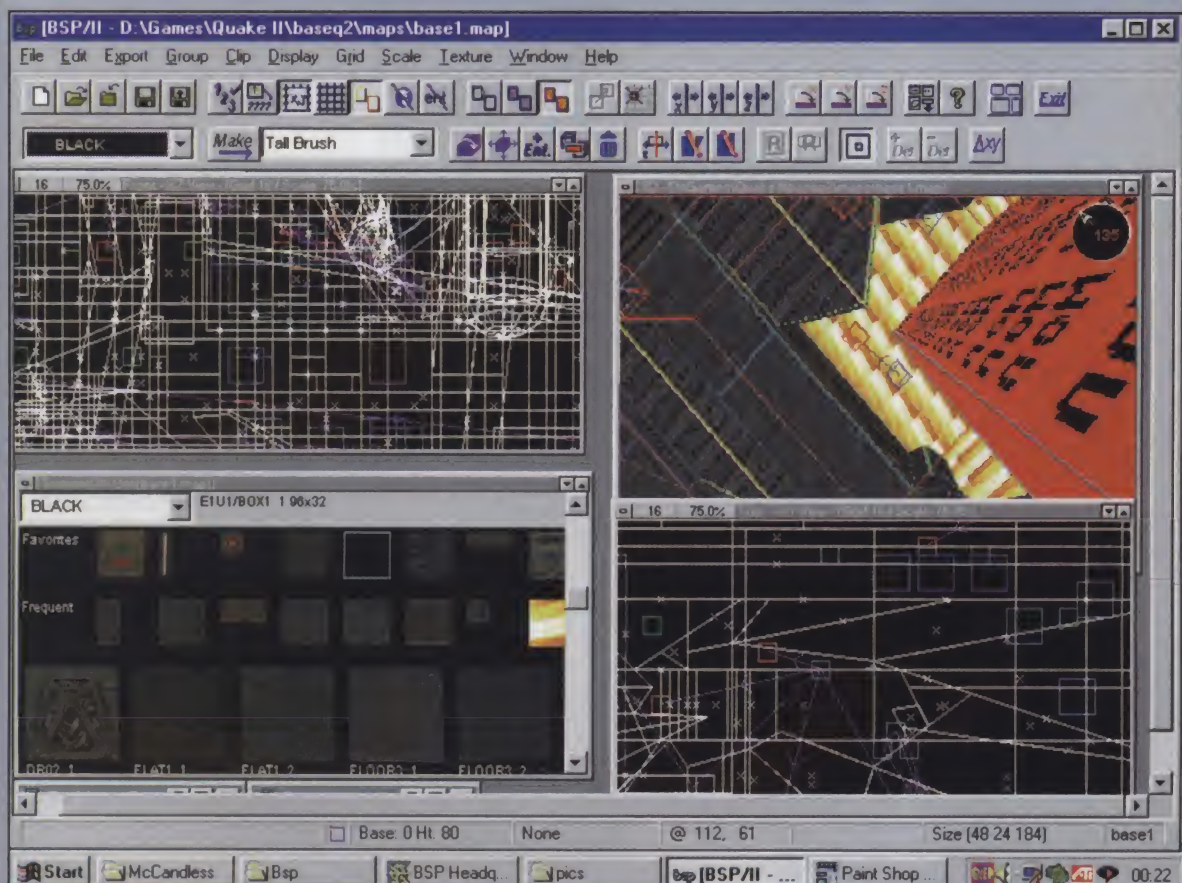
JOHN ROMERO, THE YODA OF LEVEL DESIGN, ION STORM

make a go of it, the rewards are great. Not teenage groupies and endless snorting of cocaine off Sophie Anderton's coccyx, but rather that warm glow of satisfaction you feel when you create something really cool.

WALKTHROUGH: A QUAKE LEVEL IN 10 STEPS

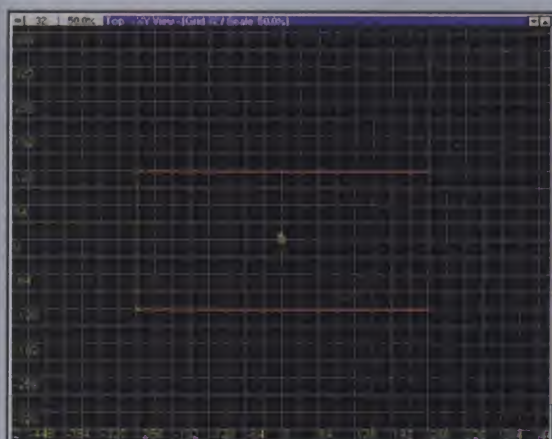
Here we go – face-first into the deep end of the unknown. Actually, modern-day designing tools have made the first armband-wearing steps into the great ocean of 3D level building pretty easy. Just make sure you understand the concept of the

'brush' (see 'Jargon' panel). Brushes are central to all 3D games, be they *Unreal*, *Quake* or *Hexen II*. In this brief tutorial we're using BSP, a fully functional freeware editor, but the principles are basically the same for all brushes.



1 Get used to the layout and the jargon. At the centre of any editor are the orthographic views – wireframes which show levels from the side, above and front. At the bottom is the texture browser, which displays all the usable artwork (most level designers will have a version of this). The 3D view is, obviously, the 3D view. Don't be put off by its lo-fi appearance – it's just a rough impression of *Quake* land. Then there's the Entity list, which contains all the objects (enemies, weapons, etc) in the game.

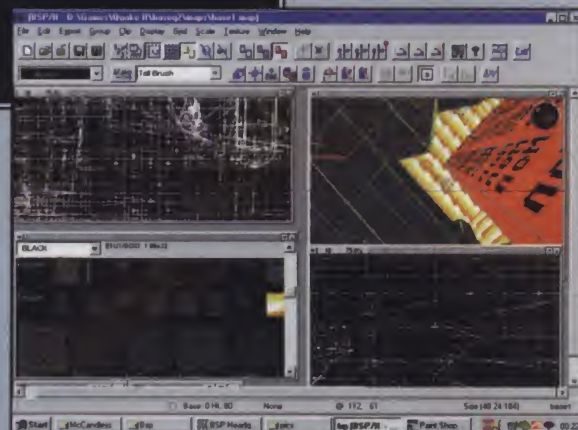
4 Bring up the texture window. Select any material which catches your eye (and preferably one that will catch someone else's). Press ALT+B and it is applied to your box (or 'brush' as it truly is). However, the box is still just a solid box, not a room, so needs to be hollowed out. On the toolbar, locate the Make button, then select Room as your option and click on the button. You'll be asked to set a wall width. Give it 8, and your brush is turned into a proper room (choose the top-down view to see it properly).



2 Start in the top-down view. The small, red box represents camera position 1 (a right-click will move it). Turn on the grid in the top-left corner of the window so everything snaps into place, and left-click and drag at co-ordinates (-256,128) to (256,128) to make a room 512 units across by 256 down. Switch to the side view and you'll see your first awesome *Quake* level. Or, rather, a small box. Long way to go yet.

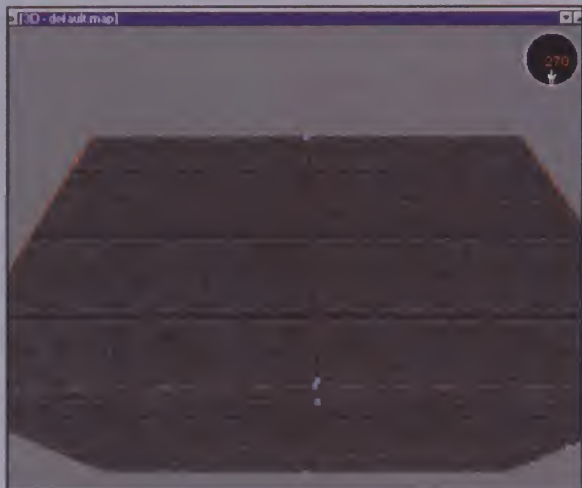


3 Your room will be the default height: 80 units. The *Quake* player character, however, is 48 units, so this is an uncomfortably low ceiling. Raising the roof is pimple-simple – just grab the top of the box with your mouse and move it up. The room will expand upwards. Leave it in the 100s somewhere.

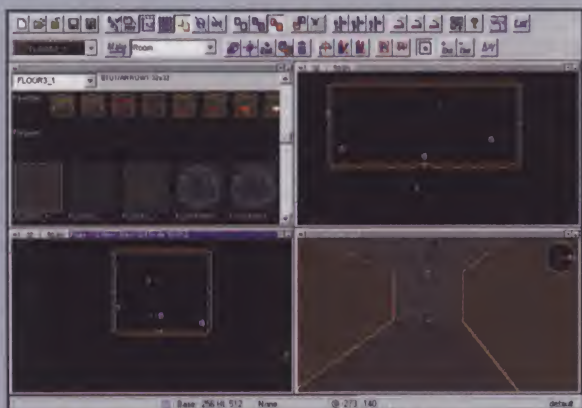


WALKTHROUGH CONTINUES OVER ➔

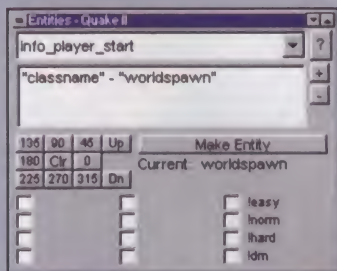
← WALKTHROUGH CONTINUED



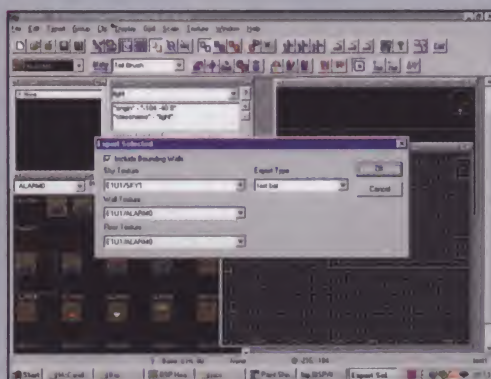
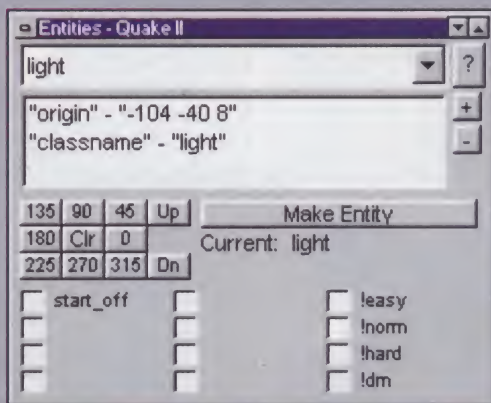
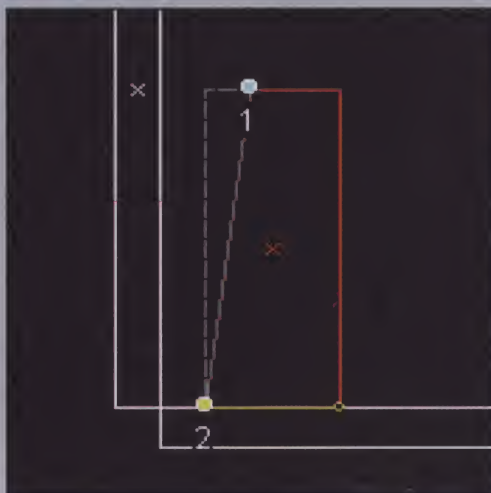
5 Switch to the 3D view to see your room through the lens of the camera. You're probably stranded somewhere stupid, so use the cursor keys to move the view around, and the PGUP and PGDN keys to look up and down. ALT+left/right sidesteps you if you get hopelessly disorientated. Note: your movements are synchronised with your orthographic views, so you see the camera graphic change as you move around. Use the 3D render buttons to cycle through the wireframe, flat and full texture preview modes. Move around in both to get a sense of the monster box you have created.



6 Okay, okay, it looks a bit crap. No problemo – you just need to do a bit of interior decorating. All the elements or brushes in the 3D window are selected, so press ESC and then select the roof (move the camera if you can't see it). Browse the toolbar and find the drop-down texture list. Choose one (generally the ones prefixed 'ceiling' work well) and press ALT+B. Select the floor and do the same. Now it looks more like a *Quake* level.



then click on Make Entity. There you go – a start position. You can use the other boxes to control the direction you're pointing, as well as deciding whether the entity appears in easy, normal, hard and deathmatch game options. Go back to the side view and make sure the entity isn't buried into the floor. Move it to Z axis 0 if it is.



8 Finally, you need a light. Draw a box in the top view from (-248,120) to (-224,96) and make it 64 units high. Add the texture TLIGHT11 to the shape. Now you can make it into a pyramid by zooming in to 200% and clipping the edges off it. Shift+right+click to make a point at (-248,0) and then make another at (-240,64). A line appears and one side of the box turns grey. Press the Carve button on the toolbar, and the guilty section will be lopped off. Repeat the operation for the three other sides (change windows if you have to) and you have a pyramid.

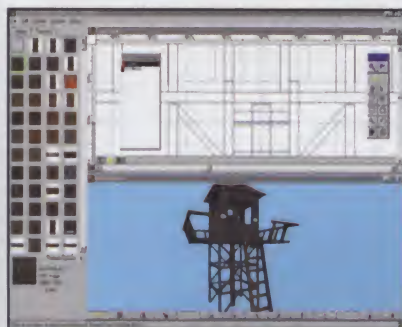
9 Draw a new brush at (-248,120) to (-232,104). Bring up the Entity window (E) and select Light Make Entity and then click on the +. Inside the key box, type the word 'light' and make the value 250. Congratulations – you've made a light. Back in the top window, move the light on top of your freshly created pyramid/lampstand. Select both, and then do a copy and paste. Drag the new light to the other corner of the room. Repeat until you have four lights kicking about.

10 Save your glorious map. Select FULL from the Export menu, and then the scary external DOS program will crunch, compile and do all manner of complex maths with your level. The whole process is automated and after a few minutes you should be standing in your final, finished masterpiece... a box with four candles in it.

WALK
THROUGH
END

EDITORS

There are several editors floating around the shops and the Internet. All use the same basic principle and all have steep learning curves, and often suffer from a 'closed shop' mentality. Each excels in different ways, and all have demo versions, so try them out and see which one suits you



DEATHMATCH MAKER II

• Virtus • www.virtus.com

Easy to use, with an excellent real-time, low-res 3D window – you can literally just drag textures onto the 3D preview to 'paint' the walls. Comes with a chunky set of bundled rooms, hallways, staircases and ladders so you can just pile them together. Or you can construct your own twisted architecture by drawing polygonal shapes and hollowing them out to make rooms.

- **UPPERS** Time-saving, scale-texture-to-wall feature
 - Good-quality compiler • Easy to use, and keeps scary complexity at bay
- **DOWNERS** Tricky control system • You can only browse one texture at a time (irritating) • Won't load *Quake II* MAP files – only its own format • Rubbish manual • Only works with *Quake II*



WORLDCRAFT 1.6

• Valve Software • www.worldcraft.com

Put together by the makers of *Half-Life*, and used in the making of *Half-Life*, *WorldCraft* should be good. And it is. It features loads of prefabricated elements – corridors, doors, stairwells, etc – and goes with a more industrial, four-windowed orthogonal look. Everything is simple to access with loads of auto-features, but there is another layer of complexity for those who want it.

- **UPPERS** Works with *Quake II*, *Quake* and *Hexen II* • Import external textures (create your own or download them) • Full-screen texture browser • Lots of prefab level parts available
- **DOWNERS** Only previews still camera views in texture mode • Pretty rubbish manual



QED 2.0

• 3D Matrix/GT Interactive • www.3dmatrix.com

Coded by an amateur-level group, qED is an impressively professional editor. Like *WorldCraft* and *BSP*, it has a four-window display, plus a 3D texture preview and a hierarchy palette, where all the elements of your level are listed and tracked in connection to each other. While there's plenty of power under the hood, functionality is impaired by silly complexity and oversights.

- **UPPERS** Very well-designed interface • Works with *Quake*, *Quake II* and *Hexen II* • Easier to keep track of your bits with hierarchy structure
- **DOWNERS** Some actions are unnecessarily complex • Terrible texture management • Difficult for beginners



BSP 0.93B

• Shareware • www.bspqh.com

Coded by patents lawyer Yahn Bernier in his spare time, *BSP* often crops up as the 'professional-level designer's choice'. Worker bees on the likes of *Daikatana* and *SIN* laud its exhaustive feature list, intuitive interface, and the healthy community of support it draws from all corners of the globe.

- **UPPERS** Massive and informative on-line support • Constantly upgraded and enhanced • Easy interface, feature-packed, fun
- **DOWNERS** Very difficult to get going • A few foibles and a bit buggy

“Be challenging with your placement of monsters and the allocation of resources, but keep in mind that your goal should be to entertain the player, not frustrate and humiliate him”

PAUL JAQUAYS, ID SOFTWARE



THE START

Popular opinion on the best way to start is divided. Certainly you should play and play and play as many 3D levels as you can feasibly manage before the front of your head falls off, and work out which of the elements you've seen you like the most. Some designers start with a box in an editor, some work on graph paper beforehand. Some have a clear idea of what they want to achieve, while others use an architectural version of Freudian free association. Most agree, however, that each level must have a 'hook' – a metaphor, a visual concept or an idea – running through it.

Anything will do. A meat grinder. A room full of lasers. Some blue catacombs. But not a maze. Mazes don't work and are boring and rubbish.

Once you've got a rough idea of what you want to achieve, you can start building. This is not the most time-consuming part – construction actually flows quite fast, quite naturally and once you've got the hang of it, large areas will spawn from your subconscious like dreams about sailors and barrels (you do have those, don't you?).

The most time-consuming task will be the details. Once the raw stuff of your level is complete, you will begin the harrowing task of refining it. Adding lighting, for example – dark lights add drama; bright lights are realistic; flickering lights hint at secrets; dappled shadows suggest eeriness. A light shone down at a rakish angle through some buttresses can give the floor a texture of its own. The red glow of nearby lava can put the fear of God into a player.

Then you graduate onto traps and puzzles, adding secrets and unexpected pitfalls so your players don't lose interest or start second-guessing you. You'll be hinting that danger and peril are a few footsteps away. You'll drape copious amounts of gibbs and corpses around to warn the player what's coming,

and set up thundering machine noises to suggest something big and metallic is chomping nearby.

Then you'll need to add objects – monsters, ammo and weapons. Place too many, however, and the level gets too easy. Place too few and it'll be a bloodbath. Then you'll need to test the level, checking for misaligned textures or crap bits. And then you'll need to render it into completion.

All these stages will take hours, but the end result just might be extraordinary. You have your mission. Do it. [E]

“The devil lives in the details. The more of your level to which the player can attach himself via familiarity, the stronger the player's sense of 'being there' will be, and the better the level will be”

LEVELORD,
RITUAL ENTERTAINMENT,
MAKERS OF *SIN*

NEXT MONTH

The experts take over. We'll be bone-washing a few of the international-level designing stars and, in return, they'll be contributing some in-depth morsels of design genius – like *How To Build A Roving Laser in Quake II*, *How To Create A Crashed Spaceship*; and *How Philip Schofield's Face Makes A Strangely Good Quake Level*. Plus a competition. And wit. And fun. And naked ladies.

TROUBLESHOOTER

Welcome to Troubleshooter: we have guides to *StarCraft* and *Supremacy*, general games Q&A and more

MISSION 1

The Protoss fight for their home planet.



MISSION 2

Dragoons defend your zealots from air attacks.



STAR CRAFT

PART 2: PROTOSS MISSIONS STRATEGY GUIDE + GENERAL TIPS

In the second part of our guide to the *StarCraft* missions, Mark Asher looks at the Protoss campaign and offers some general tips and advice

★ REVIEWED PCZ #64 • SCORE 88%

GENERAL TIPS

Get off to a successful start in *StarCraft*

- ★ **Build quickly and** have a plan. If you don't build quickly, you're dead. And if you don't have a good plan worked out, you waste time and you'll probably end up dead.
- ★ **When rushed, don't** be afraid to use your workers to attack the enemy.
- ★ **I build workers** until I have eight, and then build a 'farm' (overlord, supply depot or pylon) that supports a greater population. Then I add a few more workers and build a soldier-producing structure (gateway, barracks, spawning pool). Now I produce both workers and soldiers (zealots, marines, Zerglings) at the same time. I want about 20 workers gathering crystal, and another four gathering vespene gas – that's at my first base.
- ★ **Establish a second base** quickly, otherwise you'll lose the resource war.
- ★ **Take a worker** and scout after you have produced 15-20 workers. Start building a second base and send a squad of soldiers over to protect it.
- ★ **Scout your enemy** early and adjust your building pattern based on what you see.
- ★ **Every race has** a long-range attacker (guardians, reavers, and siege tanks in siege mode), so understand how to deal with these units or else they will knock out your defensive structures from afar. Generally, air units are good for dealing with these. However, a smart opponent will support his long-range attacker with anti-air support. Be prepared to pay a price to take out these long-range units.
- ★ **Combined arms tactics** are essential to a successful attack once the rush phase is over. Use ground forces to take out anti-air, and air units to take out ground forces.

MISSION 3

A well-defended Zerg creep awaits you in mission three.



MISSION 4

Use the Templar's psionic storm attack.



THE PROTOSS MISSIONS

1 FIRST STRIKE

★ **Goals:** destroy the Zerg and keep Fenix alive.

Cross the river and head towards the Protoss base. You'll skirmish along the way, so keep your force together. Once at the base, build probes to gather resources. Protect your base with photon cannons and build an attack force. A mix of zealots and dragoons is all you need to sweep the map free of Zerg – 5-10 of each will work.

2 INTO THE FLAMES

★ **Goals:** keep Fenix alive and destroy the Zerg Cerebrate.

Start in the NW corner. Protect the ramp to your base with photon cannons and expect to be attacked repeatedly. Start a second base in the SW corner of the map. Fenix will arrive in the NE corner after 15 minutes. The Zerg base and the Cerebrate occupy the entire SE quarter of the map. The Cerebrate itself is in the SE corner. Build an attack force and hurry to the Cerebrate

– again, zealots and dragoons are what you need. Ignore the Zerg sunken colonies – better to run past them in this case. You can use Fenix and his attack force for a combined assault, but keep Fenix alive. Again, protect your initial base, start a second base and protect that, and attack with a large force once Fenix arrives.

3 HIGHER GROUND

★ **Goal:** destroy the Zerg.

Start in the SE corner. There are two Zerg bases, one along the middle-western edge and one in the NE corner. Build probes and gather resources, and use photon cannons for defence. You will be attacked repeatedly. Start a second base on the SW corner of the map, but escort your probe with troops to protect it from burrowed Zerg. Your second base will also be attacked, so protect it well. Now build up a strike force and take out the Zerg bases one at a time. Use the scouts for air power, and nibble away at sunken colonies to clear the way for your ground troops.

4 THE HUNT FOR TASSADAR

★ **Goals:** find Tassadar, and escort Tassadar and Jim Raynor to the beacon.

Start in the NE corner; Tassadar and Raynor are in the NW corner. Head NW and take the first right turn available. Then take the next left turn. Then take the next right turn and, after circling a bit, head NW down a corridor to find Tassadar. Use the templar's psionic storm to attack any Zerg you find along the way.

Once you find Tassadar, immediately begin to build a base and protect it. You can build templars (and archons) in this mission, so do so. The hallucinate option distracts attacking Zerg, and can also be used to make phantoms of Raynor's vulture bike, which can then be used to scout the map.

The best way to know when to escort Tassadar and Raynor safely back to the beacon you started at is to build an attack force and see if you can work your way down there. Once you can, protect Tassadar and Raynor and move them to the beacon to end the mission.



THE ZERG RACE

PLAYING AS THEM

- ★ **You can go** for the quick win with a Zergling rush. Get about 20 and hot-key them to two groups, and then use the hot keys to move them rapidly. Keep hatching more Zerglings as the first wave attacks. You may need several waves to win. Like any rush tactic, this is usually an all-or-nothing gambit.
- ★ **Build and upgrade** hydralisks, mutalisks and guardians. This is your basic attack force, and often all you need. Use the guardians to take out the anti-air defences. This will force the enemy to come at you. When they do, retreat your guardians and let your muties and hydras meet the flushed-out enemy. For shock value, burrow your hydras and have them emerge in the midst of the enemy. Bring along an overlord or two to spot cloaked units and to spot for guardian targets.
- ★ **The Zerg finesse** units, the Queen and the Defiler, aren't really necessary to win. They can be quite helpful, of course. The Queen's broodling attack can be used to take out a biological-based unit like a dragoon. The Defiler's plague attack is good for weakening powerful units like the battlecruiser. The ultralisk is a nice 'terror' unit, but hydralisks in numbers are better.
- ★ **Use Zerglings** to explore the map and burrow in key spots to remain as scouts. Put them near neutral resources and surprise the enemy when it attempts to build a second base.

PLAYING AGAINST THEM

- ★ **When playing against** another Zerg opponent, build a Nydus Canal from your creep to his and instantly attack him. Use an overlord to transport a Defiler close to a Terran or Protoss base, and have the Defiler plague-attack the buildings. Terran buildings will be destroyed if not repaired promptly, and Protoss buildings will be permanently damaged to one hit point (this doesn't affect their shields, though).

MISSION 6

Blue marks beacons and allies, purple marks enemies.



MISSION 5

Protoss scouts attack a spore detector.

MISSION 7

It's civil war in mission seven.



THE TERRAN RACE

PLAYING AS THEM

- ★ **The Terran** are suited for defensive play and mobility. Two barracks filled with marines, backed by two siege tanks in siege mode and a couple of missile turrets, are effective at halting the enemy advance.
- ★ **To rush, do so with marines.** Research the stim-pak option. Jacked-up marines are fearsome. Remember that the effect is temporary, so only stim them right before they encounter the enemy. No matter how you play, the upgraded marine is your best unit.
- ★ **Put siege tanks** in siege mode near the enemy encampment, and shell the enemy structures. Protect them well with other troops. You need marines. You need a few goliaths for anti-air. You need a science vessel to detect cloaked units.
- ★ **Put ghosts** in bunkers. Their lock-down missiles are excellent defensive weapons against Terrans and Protoss. Be sure to hot-key some ghosts for fast selection, though.
- ★ **Battlecruisers with yamato** cannons are a good way to take out anti-air defensive structures. These must be protected by a combination of ground troops and wraiths, however. Adequately protected, their laser attack is quite powerful.
- ★ **Cloaked wraiths en masse** are extremely effective, but expensive. Don't let them be destroyed by nibbling at the enemy in small numbers. Remember that while a few wraiths are a nuisance, 12 wraiths can be a base-wrecker.

PLAYING AGAINST THEM

- ★ **The science vessel's** EMP missiles will destroy Protoss shielding in the area the missile strikes. Very effective.
- ★ **The vulture bike's** spider mines are lethal. Seed secondary resource areas with these.
- ★ **Build a secondary** base in your initial base and then fly the second base to its ultimate location. Fly a barracks or factory to an opponent's island and quickly build soldiers or siege tanks to surprise him. You'll need to find an unwatched place to land though.
- ★ **When attacked, use** SCVs to repair missile towers and bunkers during the attack.

5 CHOOSING SIDES

- ★ **Goal:** move Tassadar and two zealots to the beacon in the SE corner.

Start in the NW corner. There are three Zerg islands, one in the centre and one in each of the SW and SE corners. The beacon you need is in the SE corner. While you attack the middle island, use a fleet of scouts to occupy the air defences so you can use shuttles to unload zealots and dragoons. Once the middle island is secure, start a new base there and build even larger armies to attack the SE island with the beacon. Additional resources can be found along the northern edge of this map.

6 INTO THE DARKNESS

- ★ **Goal:** rescue Zeratul and escort him to the beacon. Zeratul and Tassadar must survive.

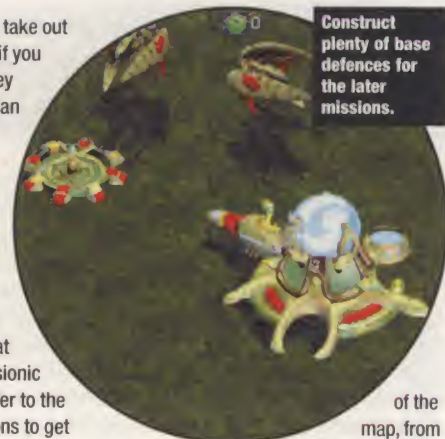
A maze mission, and the toughest one yet. You'll find a variety of reinforcements throughout. Find beacons to unlock doors. Finally, be wary of burrowed Zerg – especially infested Terrans, who can immediately kill Tassadar. Use Tassadar's hallucinate spell to create phantom zealots to scout the way – never lead with Tassadar himself! His psionic

storm spell can take out burrowed Zerg if you know where they are. Often you can move close to them, watch them unburrow, and move away immediately, causing them to burrow once more. Target that area with the psionic storm spell. Refer to the map for directions to get through this one.

7 HOMELAND

- ★ **Goals:** destroy the heart of the conclave and keep Zeratul, Tassadar and Fenix alive.

Retreat your forces under fire to your base. Harvest and build, expanding due east to a second resource area (expect your base here to be attacked). There are three enemy Protoss bases, one along the eastern middle edge, one in the SW corner and one in the SE corner. The SE corner base has the conclave (nexus) you must destroy. Ignore the eastern base. Take out the SW corner base (use a large force of combined arms) and then stage the final assault from here. Move along the bottom edge



Construct plenty of base defences for the later missions.

of the map, from west to east, to destroy the forces protecting the conclave in the SE corner.

8 THE TRAIL OF TASSADAR

- ★ **Goals:** destroy the Stasis cell and keep Raynor and Fenix alive.

Start in the NW corner. The map is bisected diagonally by water, but you have enemy bases to the south and to the east on your side of the water. Protect your base with many photon cannons. You will need a strong attack force of scouts as well, as the enemy will use reavers to destroy your base defences from long range, so you'll need to engage them quickly. Use Raynor's battlecruiser to help, but be careful – you can't repair it. Take out the base to your south

MISSION 9

Only the Dark Templar Zeratul can destroy the Cerebrates.



MISSION 8

Free Tassadar from the Stasis cell in mission eight.



MISSION 10

Terrans and Protoss ally to defeat the Overmind.



first, using several waves of scouts to soften it up. Take out the photon cannons (Raynor can help here). Now build an attack force and take out the base. The second base to your NE simply requires a normal, albeit heavy, attack.

Establish a small base near some crystals in the eastern edge of the map across the water. This area is lightly defended. The Stasis cell holding Tassadar is heavily defended in the SE corner. Simply mount an attack from your new eastern base and prepare to pay a heavy price.

9 SHADOW HUNTERS

★ **Goals:** Zeratul must destroy the Zerg cerebrates, and Zeratul and Fenix must survive.

Start along the southern edge of the map. There are resources in both the SE and SW corners, so pick an area for your initial base. Build lots of photon cannons to defend the central bottleneck passage into the southern edge of the map. Establish your second base in the corner you didn't pick for your first base.

While all this is going on, take Zeratul and carefully walk him around the map. He can take out a surprising number of Zerg defences and stray Zerg units. The cerebrates he needs to kill are located in the NW and NE

central edges of the map.

However, you will need to secure these areas before you can risk sending Zeratul there.

Beware of Zerg defilers in this one. Use arbiters to cloak your units so the defilers cannot target them with their plague attack. To win, produce a large attack force and sweep the map clear from south to north. Use observers to find burrowed Zerg.

10 EYE OF THE STORM

★ **Goals:** defeat the Overmind and keep Tassadar, Zeratul and Raynor alive.

A spectacular final mission! Start with two bases, one Terran and one Protoss. The key is securing enough secondary resource areas to build enough units to survive the Zerg onslaught.

The Zerg defences are comprised of a large base containing the Overmind in the centre of the map, surrounded by four smaller Zerg bases. Expect to take out two to three of these smaller bases before the final assault.

The Terrans start in the NW corner. To their south you will find more crystal – unfortunately, a Zerg base is right next to the crystal. Soften up this Zerg base with air attacks, and then establish a couple of missile

towers along the ridge overlooking their base. Support the towers with marines and then roll up a couple of siege tanks and put them in siege mode overlooking the Zerg crystals. They will destroy all the Zerg drones and several Zerg structures. Now take an attack force and roll down the ramp into the Zerg base to destroy it.

While all this Terran activity is in progress, you also have to keep your Protoss busy. After securing your initial Protoss base, take an attack force and a probe and move due west. You'll find some undefended crystal to harvest. Build a base here (expect to be attacked).

After you have these additional two bases (one Terran and one Protoss), work on the remaining Zerg bases. Pinch the Zerg base to the north of your new Protoss base with Protoss attacks from the south and Terran attacks from the north. Once you eliminate this base, the mission is well in hand. Build large attack forces and attack the other satellite Zerg bases to the east of the Overmind. Establish mini-bases near crystal deposits you gain control of, and drop in Gateways and Barracks and produce a stream of soldiers. The final assault simply requires a large force. The Overmind is difficult to kill, so expect to hammer on it for a bit. [X]

THE PROTOSS RACE

PLAYING AS THEM

- ★ **Protoss units** are powerful, but expensive. Zealots and dragoons are your basic ground troops. Photon cannons, while weak, are great in numbers as they attack both land and air targets. Build them close together so several will attack at once.
- ★ **The scout** is your basic air unit, and is more powerful than the Terran wraith or Zerg mutalisk. Scouts in numbers can wreak havoc.
- ★ **Archons** are very effective units, albeit quite expensive. If you can afford them, use them.
- ★ **Reavers** are great at destroying structures, but are slow. Best to use shuttles to get them in place and pick them up, and retreat when they are threatened.
- ★ **Carriers** are good for base defence, although a bit slow to use on the attack if you expect to have to retreat them back across the map.
- ★ **The finesse units** for the Protoss are the templars and arbiters. Templars with psionic storm can be effective if there's a bottleneck into your base. Build photon cannons to slow up ground attacks, and use your templar to storm the attackers at the bottleneck. Arbiters are great for cloaking an attack force en route, but their own uncloaked presence tips your hand to the opponent. Use their Stasis to freeze a battlecruiser while the battle rages, and then when the spell wears off you can concentrate on the battlecruiser.

PLAYING AGAINST THEM

- ★ **Shuttle templars** near enemy crystal deposits if there's a safe area for them to land. Use the templars to psionic storm and kill the enemy workers, and then load them back up again and retreat them. Use their hallucinate spell to copy a scout and get two free units to scout the map. To confuse the enemy, hallucinate copies of archons and carriers before you attack.
- ★ **Put reavers** on patrol right next to your outer photon cannons. They will then target any siege tanks that attempt to set up and attack your cannons. Don't do this if your opponent is the Zerg, however.
- ★ **Use an arbiter's** recall spell to quickly bring offensive units to the area. This is great for bringing in reavers quickly.

STAR WARS SUPREMACY



① Don't be put off by the interface. Highlight the units you want to move by using the CTRL key...



② ...drag those units over to wherever you want to move them...



③ ...and voila! Those bad boys are on their way.

Yes it's a *Star Wars* game. And, yes, it's a strategy title. As many of you have found out, however, it's also bloody hard work. **Andrew Borelli** attempts to explain all

★ REVIEWED PCZ #64 • SCORE 68%

Supremacy is one of those funny games you either love or hate. For the *Star Wars* aficionado or the space opera cognards, there's really one heck of a game here. But, sadly, many people are turned off by the quirky interface and mountainous volume of resource management before they get to the meat of the game. Given a chance, the seasoned *Supremacy* player can easily lose whole days playing this game. But, truth be told, *Supremacy* can be overwhelming for the beginner, especially after watching the AI pound another one of your planets unopposed.

Here we'll attempt to clarify some of the more murky details of gameplay which you'll need to understand in order to succeed. We'll also provide you with the necessary foundation you'll need to build a solid overall strategy. *Supremacy* is too non-linear to try and pin down the one tactic that always works. The game always starts in an almost completely random fashion, so you must instead know how to adapt proper basic strategies in order to capitalise on winning situations and recover from poor ones. That's what we hope to provide here. With patience, practice and a little luck, you'll be on your way to galactic dominance. Probably.

THE BASICS

The biggest complaint most gamers have with *Supremacy* is that the long-winded interface makes the game cumbersome and unplayable. Getting used to it is the first step. Firstly, remember

that you can drag-and-drop anything you want from one window to another, as long it is a legal move, and there's usually more than one way to move something around. The trick is to figure out the quickest way to get it there on the screen.

For example, let's say you've got five squadrons of TIE fighters on Coruscant and you want to move them to a fleet orbiting Chandrilla, a nearby planet. You could open up the system defences window and click on the fighter tab to see all available fighters. Then you could click on the fleet where you want to send them to bring up the fleet window. What then?

Well, if you like you can drag-and-drop each TIE fighter from Coruscant over to the fleet window. This is perfectly valid, and the fighters will move to the fleet. Or you could click on each fighter with the CTRL button depressed, selecting as many as you want. Then you could right-click the screen, bringing up the unit menu. The final step would

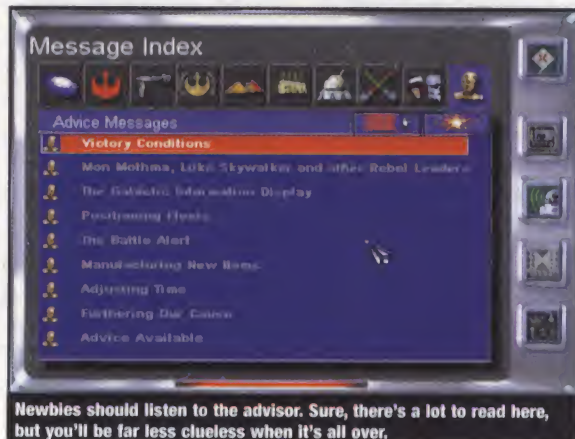
be to select Move and click on the fleet in the other window. Ta-da!

Either way, the fighters are on their way. You can use the same principle when you want to move characters, ships, ground units or whatever. (And remember, troops and characters don't need starships to move from one friendly planet to another, although in some cases it certainly is quicker.)

One thing you *don't* have to do is repeatedly use the Show Idle function of the GID. Early on in the game, you should have a good mental picture of where your important stuff is. While Show Idle is a useful assistant, it's a wasted step if you already know where things are. If you're getting overwhelmed, ask your agent to help you.

THE AGENT

Most of you will probably want to handle resource management yourself. However, remember that your agent – the droid who appears on the lower portion of the screen (IMP-22 for the



Newbies should listen to the advisor. Sure, there's a lot to read here, but you'll be far less clueless when it's all over.



This 450-meter long Imperial star cruiser was designed to be a unit of time. Thanks to their prior configurations can be configured to profiles.



The CC-7700 is an older sibling to the Corellian Gunship. While lightly armed, the CC-7700 is designed primarily as a platform for gravity well projector. The function of this vessel is to prevent the withdrawal of enemy vessels from a battle zone.



ⓘ Research is critical to your war effort. Without it, spiffy new units like the Strike Cruiser, CC-7700 frigate and the oh-so-cool TIE Defender don't get built.

⌚ Whenever a new character comes into play, see what he/she does best. As you can see, Bevel Lemelisk should get to work immediately researching something.

RESEARCH

Identify the R&D-capable characters and get them working pronto

Research is a critical function in the game. Research happens automatically in each field (facilities, starships and ground troops) as long as you have one of each type of construction facility located somewhere. However, this process is very slow and completely random until you get R&D-capable people to work. This is critical for both sides: the Rebels need more powerful capital ships, while the Empire needs better fighters. Both sides will want strategy-enhancing ships like Interdictors or CC-7700s, and more efficient transports. Immediately identify which characters are R&D-capable as soon as they come into play, and get them to work.

SPECIAL FORCES

While Special Forces are a powerful weapon, they need backup troops and a good leader

Special Forces units can make the crucial difference in *Supremacy*, but many players find them impossible to use at first. Too often, the wrong combination of units and characters spells disaster, resulting in the loss of SpecForces or, worse, dead or captured characters.

Remember that the Special Forces aren't sufficient on their own. Firstly, SpecForces units are nowhere near as large as their ground force counterparts, so don't think of them as a whole army. Secondly, they don't work very well unless a competent character is leading them.

When you decide to send Special Forces out on a mission, make sure your intelligence about the target is updated. If the target is very heavily defended you might not be able to carry out your primary mission until a secondary one destroys some of the defending units.

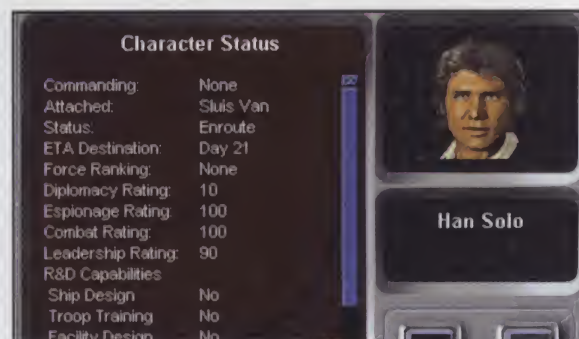
Assuming the target is defended, send an average of six to ten SpecForce units on the mission, along with one or two characters who are good at espionage and/or combat. Use one of the characters and about half the SpecForces as decoys (don't know how to do this? It's in the manual!), and use the rest to actually complete the mission.

If the mission is still failing, chances are the target is too heavily defended. Try an espionage mission (again, use decoys) followed up by some sabotage runs against defending units. Then try your mission again.

Remember: sabotage is a wonderful tactic both sides will want to employ, especially against capital ships. Capital ships take a long time to build until your production really gets rolling; destroying some of your opponent's capital ships early on forces him to waste time producing more and leaves his worlds open to attack. (Similarly, you can cause the enemy a lot of grief by immediately targeting his construction yards – if you can find them.) Only Imperial Commandos (Imperials), Infiltrators (Rebels) and a number of the characters can perform the sabotage mission.



⌚ A mix of characters and Special Forces units should be deployed in great numbers if you want to succeed. See how many characters are decoys on this mission? The more the better. Looks like this shipyard's finished.



⚡ Rebel players take note: never put Han Solo on a starship! As the pilot of the Millennium Falcon, he moves faster than everyone else, and so will anyone moving with him. In this example, Luke and Han are both moving separately from Yavin to Sluis Van. See how much quicker Han's going to get there?





Bunch up your facilities to maximise their effect. Look how quickly Endor can churn out new shipyards!



Explore and colonise the Outer Rim as quickly as possible. These new colonies will make excellent staging bases and production centres.

RESOURCES

You can't make a silk purse out of a pig's arse – get materialistic

Resources are the key to this game. Without them, new units and facilities don't get built, damaged capital ships aren't repaired and fighter squadrons don't get replacements.

Resources are the reason you want to send diplomatic envoys anywhere you've got a shot at swaying the population. The more planets that are on your side, the more resources come pouring in. Naturally, the closer these resources are to the core, the more units you want to dedicate to defending them; if the enemy blockades a resource-rich planet, your raw resources aren't going anywhere.

You'll need mines and refineries to harvest these resources and make them useful. Identify planets rich in raw resources, colonise or sway them, then send mines and refineries there.

Take a look at the three gauges at the top of the screen: the raw resources gauge (represented by a mine icon), the refined resources gauge (refinery icon), and the maintenance points gauge (wrench). What they tell you provides a picture of what you need to build. If you've got a lot of raw resources but no

refined materials, you need more refineries. If you've got no raw resources, you need more mines (surprise!). Maintenance points are a different story – each pair of mines and refineries produces 50 maintenance points, and you want to make sure this number at least remains above 100. Produce as many maintenance points as you can.

Mines and refineries are vulnerable to orbital bombardments, so consider shield generators if they don't already exist on your resource-rich worlds. They can also be sabotaged, so keep some troops and fighters on the planet as security forces. (Naturally, you can also sabotage or bomb your opponent's resources – hint, hint.)

Imperial players take note: when you get a message stating that smuggling is taking place on a world, that means some of your resources are being diverted to the Alliance player! There are two ways to combat smuggling: either send a diplomat to increase your popularity on that world, or start building TIE fighters (because they're cheap and can be built quickly) and send them to the planet in question.



Mineral-rich worlds like Talus should be exploited as soon as possible. Without resources, your war effort is going to stall. Notice the resources gauges at the top of the screen.

Imperials, C3PO for the Rebels) – will automatically handle as few or as many tasks as you like. If you're uncomfortable with constantly having to manage facilities, or if this is your first time in a larger galaxy and you're getting overwhelmed, let your agent do it for you – don't worry, we won't tell anybody. Keep in mind, however, that the agent probably won't handle things as quickly or as efficiently as you can by doing it yourself.

Take heed of all the advice (and there's a lot of it) your agent has to offer. Read it all over once just to get a feel for what's going on, then you can decide whether you want to continue receiving advice, and if you want verbal cues later on as additional messages pour in – and lots of them will.

Pay close attention to incoming messages. Some of them are very routine, but others are vitally important. You especially want to take note of when training facilities, construction yards and orbital shipyards are free for additional tasks, when there's trouble on one of your planets, when units arrive at their destination, and when something happens to a character.

Finally, do take time to skim over the manual. Yeah, I know, real gamers don't do that. Deal with it. In all seriousness, give the manual a quick look. It's actually pretty well-written, and describes a lot of the important stuff in detail.

GETTING DOWN TO IT

The first thing to remember when you start a new game, regardless of what side you choose, is that you're probably outnumbered. It

might seem weird to think of the Imperials as lacking ships, but remember: *Supremacy* does not mimic what you remember from the movies, so unlearn what you have learned.

Supremacy randomly creates a new world whenever you start the game, so check out the galaxy on the GID. See where your important characters are (for the Alliance, almost everyone begins on Yavin), the size and location of your fleets, and where your facilities are. Does the enemy have friendly planets dangerously close to your own? Is there an opportunity to take or sway a facility-rich neutral right off the bat? Are you badly outnumbered in one system? Analyse where you need to expend resources, and where the enemy might be caught off-guard.

Identify where your construction yards are and immediately begin constructing more. This is time-consuming, but it's vital to your survival. In the meantime, begin a two-fold campaign of expansion: first, rush your best diplomats to the nearest planets containing facilities and start swaying them to your side. At the same time, take the orbital shipyards you do have and begin constructing fighters (Rebels) or small capital ships (Imperials) to defend your planets and hunt for or even harass the enemy.

Once you've got those planets that actually contain facilities on your side, get those new facilities to work cranking out ships and ground units. Try to bunch up facilities on several planets; six shipyards spread out aren't as useful as six on a single planet. This makes for a tempting target to the enemy, but that's why you'll want to protect your resources (more to follow on this). Plus, as



Identify your diplomats and get them to work right away. But get those fleets constructed double-quick to protect your new allies.



As soon as possible, consolidate your most powerful ships into cohesive strike forces, leaving lesser ships behind to screen against raids. Then do some raiding of your own.

soon as you can build advanced facilities, don't be afraid to slowly scrap the old ones one at a time and replace them with advanced models.

While that's going on, you'll want to explore the Outer Rim, either by sending probes or by sending transports filled with units. The latter is preferable if you've started with transports, or managed to build some quickly, because you want to begin colonising good prospects (ie planets with large amounts of resources and energy) for the purposes of mining and facility production. Eventually your core worlds are going to be strapped for energy and you'll need to send new facilities somewhere else.

Don't ignore neutral planets that have no facilities. While these planets can wait to be swayed, you'll want to send diplomats to these worlds as soon as possible. As either side, it's bad if the enemy gains a foothold in a system where you've got the bulk of your resources. Besides, remember that you can always construct facilities on one world and send them somewhere else by using the Destination command, so these worlds will become important soon enough.

CONSTRUCT AND CONQUER

As soon as you can, try to build up one or two planets in each system with at least two or three construction yards. Then select other planets and start sending new training centres and orbital shipyards there. (You'll later need more construction yards, but you'll need other facilities first.)

First and foremost, you're going to need capital ships and fighters – and fast. It's also a good idea to garrison worlds

where your resources are located, so make a point of training troops and sending them out as quickly as you can. For the Alliance, Army and Fleet regiments make great garrison troops; Mon Calamaris are best, but come later. For the

“Given a chance, the seasoned Supremacy player can easily lose whole days playing this game”

Imperials, Army regiments are your best bet to start; Stormtroopers are even better until you've done some R&D, but they're time-consuming to build. Don't forget to place fighter garrisons over your planets too. If the enemy does bounce in with an invasion fleet, your fighters might drive them off or destroy them. Naturally, capital ships are best at this, but at the start they can't be everywhere.

Basically, never let a facility lay fallow. Keep on top of everything, or have your agent do it. In the beginning, you need to be producing the right equipment at all times. Stop building and expanding and your opponent will crush you like a grape.

Once you've got sufficient numbers of troops and ships, the temptation will be to overrun undefended neutral worlds, but try to resist doing this. Sure, you'll take the planet, but (especially on higher difficulties) there's a good chance an uprising will occur and you'll have to tie down troops and characters to quell it. While it still might be worth the effort to invade a planet rather than sway it diplomatically, consider

carefully the consequences of your actions. Getting tied up putting down uprisings all over the place while your opponent continues to expand is the surest way to get wiped off the map early in the game.

Do, however, group forces wherever and whenever you can. While you must keep some fast ships and fighter groups around to screen against a raid in a system, you want to create one or two powerful groups consisting of good capital ships, lighter 'screening' ships and as many fighters as you can carry. If you intend to start invading planets, don't forget to take at least three units of ground forces with you. **[E]**

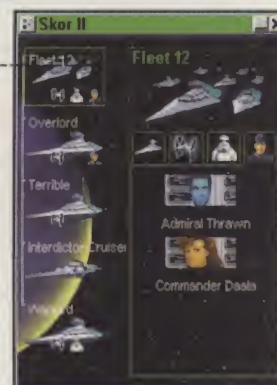
[D] Dull as it may be, assign strong leaders to planetary garrisons if there's no room for them in the fleets. Corellia's fighter garrison will hold its own against smaller capital ships now.

LEADERS

Too many Indians...

As soon as you've got a new character in play, check out what he or she does best. If the character has good leadership abilities, get that person assigned to a fleet quickly. Leaders can and will make the difference when fleets duke it out or when you're invading a planet. Even outmatched forces will do better in combat – assign Daala as a commander and watch how much longer those puny TIE fighters stay alive.

Even if there are no fleets or ships nearby, or if you've got no use for a character at a particular moment, don't be afraid to assign him to a planetary garrison command. Your ground troops will do much better if the enemy shows up, and if you have a commander assigned to the planet your fighter garrison's performance will be similarly improved.



Leaders will keep your units alive longer and improve their overall performance. The ever-shapely Daala will no doubt give your TIE pilots something to live for.



CHEATMASTER



The great yellow philosopher Homer J Simpson once stated: "Nothing's easy." He also evangelised the virtues of cheating. We suggest following his sagely advice to the letter

★ CHEATMEISTERS Warren Christmas and Keith Pullin

CHEATS WIN PRIZES!

If you have any tips you'd like to impart to the rest of us lowly souls, please send them in to the usual address: Troubleshooter, PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. The best one wins a recommended game of our choice. See you next issue, out Thursday 9 July.

ON THE CD



We've got solutions to loads of games on this month's CD. Check out the 'Editorial' section of your CD-ROM to get your mitts on more helpful solutions.

INCOMING (Rage Software)

You want to cheat? Just type the following passwords while playing the game.

★ **Getting started:** The easiest way to access the main selection of cheats is to select Start Game and type NUMBERONEDACRE STREET (that's Rage's address in Liverpool, don't you know). This brings up a menu which enables you to choose any level from the Campaign mode (including the bonus levels) and toggle many of the cheats below.

★ **In-game cheats:** Alternatively, type one of the following while you're actually playing: INVULNERABILITY, INFINITELIVES and INFINITEWEAPONS are all self-explanatory, as is EASYSHOOT. SUPERSHOOT gives you infinite smart bombs – press fire and every enemy ship on the radar explodes.

★ **Cheat modes:** Typing CHEATKEYS enables you to switch the various cheat modes on and off by using the function keys. Typing HAVEALL gives you all of the above!

★ **Secret levels:** Typing FLYMETOTHEMOON will take you to the first of the secret levels, in which the aim is to shoot down as many of the enemy ships in the given time.

In the second bonus level – accessed by typing OLDMACDONALD – you have to shoot down the bouncing cows. Type SUPERDAISY to make the cows a selectable 'craft' in arcade and multi-player mode. TANKSALOT enables extra tanks.

★ **Gravity levels:** Play around with gravity levels by typing CATWALK (for low gravity) and FATWALK (for high gravity). IWIEGHNORMAL returns the setting to normal when the next level is loaded.

★ **Graphics settings:** Finally, if you're bored with looking at the pretty visuals, you can play around with the graphics settings (although we're not entirely sure why you'd want to do this). WHATSTHEPOINT turns everything into dots which, er, makes the game unplayable. WIREWEAVING gives you a *Battlezone*-like wireframe mode... which is also unplayable. FLATBROKE invokes flat shading, while SOLIDASAROCK (solid shading) and GOURAUD are the standard settings and will return you back to normal.

★ **Cheat key:** One of the cheats typed into *Incoming* is called CHEATKEY – once this is done, use the following F keys to toggle the cheats on or off:

- F2 Easy shoot
- F3 Invulnerability
- F4 Infinite lives
- F5 Infinite weapons
- F6 Smart bomb
- F7 Quit
- F8 Store current situation
- F9 Reload stored situation
- F10 Frame wait on/off
- F11 Restart

FLIGHT SIMULATOR 98 (Microsoft)

This cheat enables you to go pretty much wherever you want instantly.

★ Simply press Y+F4 while on the runway and you will rise mysteriously into the air. When

you want to stop, press Y again. Now, at any point during the game, press Y again to enter SLEW mode. Now press F2 to go forward/backwards, and F1 to stop. F4 takes you up/down, with F3 to stop. You can also use the arrow keys on your keyboard to move left and right. When you are done, press Y once again to restart the game.

OUTWARS (Microsoft)

Activate the communications/radio console and type in the following cheats.

- maledod Completely invincible
- keymaster Infinite jet pack fuel
- dirtyharry Infinite ammo
- buzz Gives you wings
- phantom Use F11 and F12 to spy on aliens
- snipsnip Change sex!
- gohome Return to start position
- sneakers Stealth mode
- thrasher Display location of enemies on radar
- timewarp Toggle mission timer on/off
- weaponcam Show the view from your fired rounds
- jumpXXX Jump to a new level. Replace XXX with level name (eg jumpoasis, jumpunubis, jumpagnarok, jumpjuggernaut and jumpdead etc)

STAR WARS REBELLION (LucasArts)

A few simple but effective *Star* hints that you should take into consideration.

- ★ Practise on the easy setting first – it's easier to understand the interface this way.
- ★ Switch off C3PO. In fact, get rid of all the 'droid noises, which are more irritating than the interface.
- ★ Select the Very Slow time setting – this gives you more time to think about strategy.
- ★ Make good use of the encyclopedia – it's the best

way to increase your knowledge of the 'other' side.

- ★ Don't rely on your knowledge of the films. A lot of the events in the game match those of the films, but they don't always conclude in the same way. Clear your mind of Hollywood – this is different.
- ★ Spend time learning about the different ships, troops, facilities, planets and characters. They're all good for different things, and they're not always true to the films.

REDLINE RACER (Ubi Soft)

To follow up last month's *Redline Racer* cheat, we can bring you another. Oh yes. The fun never stops.

- ★ If you type your name as 'ABODE', you will be able to access all bikes and drive on all tracks.

MOTORHEAD (Gremlin)

There are definitely a lot more cheats around for *Motorhead*, and hopefully we'll print them next month. In the meantime, try out these excellent Easter eggs to bring a whole new angle to the game.

- ★ On the personal options



screen, enter your name as 'Supercars' and the team name as 'Gremquote', and when you start the game you'll view the race from an overhead perspective. Alternatively, enter your name as 'Demon' and the team name once again as 'Grem' to get bouncy suspension. Slightly off-the-wall, these ones, but good nonetheless.

MECHWARRIOR: THE TITANIUM TRILOGY (Activision)

The following cheats now work on all three games in the *MechWarrior* series, specifically if they are part of the recently released *Titanium Trilogy* pack.

- ★ While playing, hold down Ctrl+Shift+Alt, then type:
 - su Invulnerability on/off
 - is Unlimited ammo on/off
 - li End mission successfully
 - in Enable jump jets
 - cr Unlimited jump jet fuel
 - be Enable roam mode
 - oo Heat tracking on/off
 - it 'Nuke' current target
 - re Destroy current target

If you're having trouble with a particular game, try calling the helpful PC Zone Tips Line: 0171 917 7698; Thursdays only, 3.30pm - 7.30pm

UNREAL (GT Interactive)

Nothing's easy, especially *Unreal*. However, type the following codes into the console and hopefully things will become a lot more tolerable.

- GOD Invulnerability
- ALLAMMO Gives you 999 ammo on every gun
- GOD Lets you fly
- GHOST Enables you to walk through walls
- WALK When flying or ghosting, this returns you to normal
- SUMMON Enables you to summon an item. For example: SUMMON EIGHTBALL, SUMMON FLAKCANNON, SUMMON NALI, SUMMON SKAARJWARRIOR etc
- PLAYERSONLY Freeze time. Press again to resume
- OPEN MAPNAME Jump to any level. For example: OPEN DIG
- BEHINDVIEW 1 Gives you a third-person perspective camera angle
- BEHINDVIEW 0 Restore first-person perspective

Stuff

GREAT GEAR FOR MEN



If you are looking for expert buying advice from micro hi-fi to football boots AND a bit more, look no further than **STUFF**



Each month we review a huge range of products, add expert advice, plenty of entertainment, and a dash of sex appeal.



**NEW ISSUE,
ON SALE NOW**

DEAR KEITH



Are games becoming harder? Have we lost the ability to think for ourselves? Whatever the reason, the Q&A postbag keeps growing larger

★ ANSWERED BY Keith Pullin

GOT A PROBLEM?

If you've got a game-related problem then we want to hear from you. Get in touch with your query and we'll sort you out with the solution. Send your queries to us via e-mail at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading 'Dear Keith', or by post to **Keith Pullin, PC Zone, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.**

CALL US... OR THEM

If you can't wait for a solution to your game problems, then call us. Every Thursday afternoon from 3.30pm – 7pm we operate a help tips line where we endeavour to solve your gaming problems. You can reach us on 0171 917 7698. Alternatively, get in touch with the publishers of your game. Most publishers offer a helpline number which dispenses handy advice and can often predict common problems long before they happen. Contact numbers for game publishers are listed on page 83. Of course, you could just try playing the game a bit longer.

ON THE CD



We've got even more game solutions on this month's cover CD. Each month we'll add to the database of tips on our CD to bring you an up-to-date helpline to all the best titles. To look at this month's tips, use the CD browser and click on the 'Editorial' tab. Now select the 'Tips' section. Also, don't forget there are over 1200 tips on our website – www.pczone.co.uk.

BACKSTAGE PASS

Q I have a big problem with *Obsidian*. I'm trying to get through the maze where you have to use the colour-coded key passes. The trouble is, I have no idea where I'm supposed to be going and I keep running out of passes. Tell me, what I should do? I'm completely baffled.

Andy Waters, Portsmouth

A Never fear, Andy. The room you have to visit is at the top left corner of the maze. In order to get there though, you must pick up more passes in the maze itself. As long as you keep collecting them you should have more than enough to reach your goal.

TITANIC QUEST

Q I'm finding it hard to get anywhere on *Starship Titanic* and was wondering whether there are any cheats or hints that can help me get further. Also, can you please tell me why the Bellbot hates me so much?

Ben Fisher, Glamorgan

A As far as we know there are no cheats for this game – yet. As for the Bellbot, you're just not catching him in the right mood! Wait until he's in a good mood (you can work this out by looking at the colour of the light on the Bellbot itself), say "help" and he'll give you a hint. The Bellbot gives general and specific help, so make sure you ask in every room. Sorted.

PLANE MAD!

Q I've heard that it's possible to fly any of the planes and helicopters in *Joint Strike Fighter*. Is this true?

Lionel Peters, Stoke-on-Trent

A It certainly is. We've printed this tip before, but it's a great laugh so we'll do it again – just for you, Lionel. All you need to do is hold down both control keys and then press 'Enter' to choose your aircraft. You'll find that you can now cycle all the way through the entire catalogue of flying machines. Have fun.

EASY RIDER

Q I've just bought *Forsaken* and I keep getting lost. Is there any way to make the game easier?

Bill Branson, Hereford

A You pitiful loser. The thing about *Forsaken* (and a lot of other games, come to think of it) is that you have to keep saving your progress. Sure, you still get lost, but if you store the game at certain points and prepare yourself for a lot of trial and error, you can eventually build up a picture in your head that will help you sail through the game much more quickly. Sorry, but that's all there is to it. You've just got to keep practicing.

DINKY WOES

Q My mate reckons it's possible to get a flame-thrower on *Dink Smallwood*? Is he having me on?

Robert Dwight, Bath

A Actually it's true. Go to the town of Windemire, head south to the beach and look for a series of shells stretching out to sea. Follow these shells and you'll end up walking on water, and after a while you'll meet a shopkeeper who will sell you a Flame Bow for 25,000 gold! It is a lot of dosh, but we guarantee you will not be disappointed!

JOLLY ROGER

Q In the second section on *The Curse Of Monkey Island*, I get into a kind of duel with a green pirate but I can't beat him. What do I do?

Mags Jones, Stratford

A Oddly enough, the way around this guy is very simple – you just need to play exactly the same as he does and then you'll sail through easily. It seems this bloke just cannot cope with you copying him.

BRIDGE TOO FAR

Q I'm having all sorts of problems on *Myth: The Fallen Lords*. On the Siege At Mandrigalte stage, I can't really seem to come up with the right

strategy to cross the bridge. Please give me some advice!

Liam Deschamps, Loughborough

A Ah yes, very tricky this bit. The best thing to do is arrange your warriors in an arc (formation 6 or quote 7) around the base of the bridge, then set two archers in the water on either side of the bridge while the rest move forward. Keep them lined up, and slowly move down the far side of the bridge while aiming at the Soulless. Hopefully this tactic should get you through.

OVER 'ERE, JOHN

Q For some reason I always find it hard to score on *Actua Soccer 2*. Is there a way I could score goals easily?

Tim Anderson, Hove

A No, not really. You've got to use skill, my son. One thing you could try though is when you take a penalty, just tap the shoot button very lightly. Nine times out of ten the ball will fly into the back of the net. Will that do?

HIGH AS A KITE

Q I am bloody rubbish at *F-15*! I can't blow a damn thing up. Are there any special secrets you can tell me about the game to make it easier?

Freddy Fullerton, Derby

A There's not really too much help to give here. After all, it's a flight simulation, so you've just got to keep practicing, really. However, as with most games of this type, I would say make the most of your wingmen – try to get them to engage in dogfights, rather than yourself. And on a slightly different tack, make sure you use the time accelerate option – this will get you into the action quicker and means you don't lose concentration. See how you get on with that.

RACE FOR SPACE

Q I don't know if you cover games this old, but I've got a problem with *Ascendancy*. The thing is, I just cannot seem to develop my technology fast enough; all the other species

“I am bloody rubbish at *F-15*! I can't blow a damn thing up. Are there any special secrets you can tell me?”

FREDDY FULLERTON, DERBY

are way ahead of me when it comes to exploring the star lanes and I've had enough. Give us a hand please.

Bryan Nash, Bucks

A You're right, it is an old game. But because it's one of my favourites I'll help out. Right, you're missing a fundamental tactic here and that is: pick a race that is either dedicated to research, or one that is highly capable diplomatically. Choosing the latter means you can convince other races to simply give you their technology. Will that help you? I think it will.

CLUELESS

Q *Men In Black* is crap but I'm still stuck. Don't laugh, just tell me this: right at the beginning I see an alien. When I try and follow him I seem to get blown up by a bomb. What's going on?

Ravinda Kahn, Barnet

A You silly arse. Why don't you try reading the instruction booklet? You'll find it's explained quite clearly there. Doh!

LUNAR LUNACY

Q Is it true there are secret levels on *Dungeon Keeper* which are only accessible when the moon is full?

Lee Ryan, Blaby

A Almost, yes. They're actually activated during periods of increased lunar activity! So check your diary for full moons, lunar eclipses and other such Earth/Moon occurrences. Sounds strange but it's true.

LIVE FOREVER

Q I bought *Little Big Adventure 2* the other day and I'm experiencing numerous problems with it. I've heard you can help me out, so please, just tell me how to gain infinite lives or something similar.

Janet Lewis, Enfield

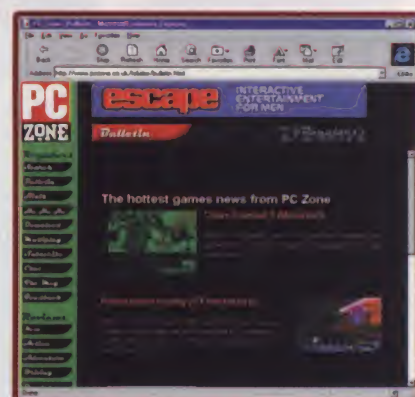
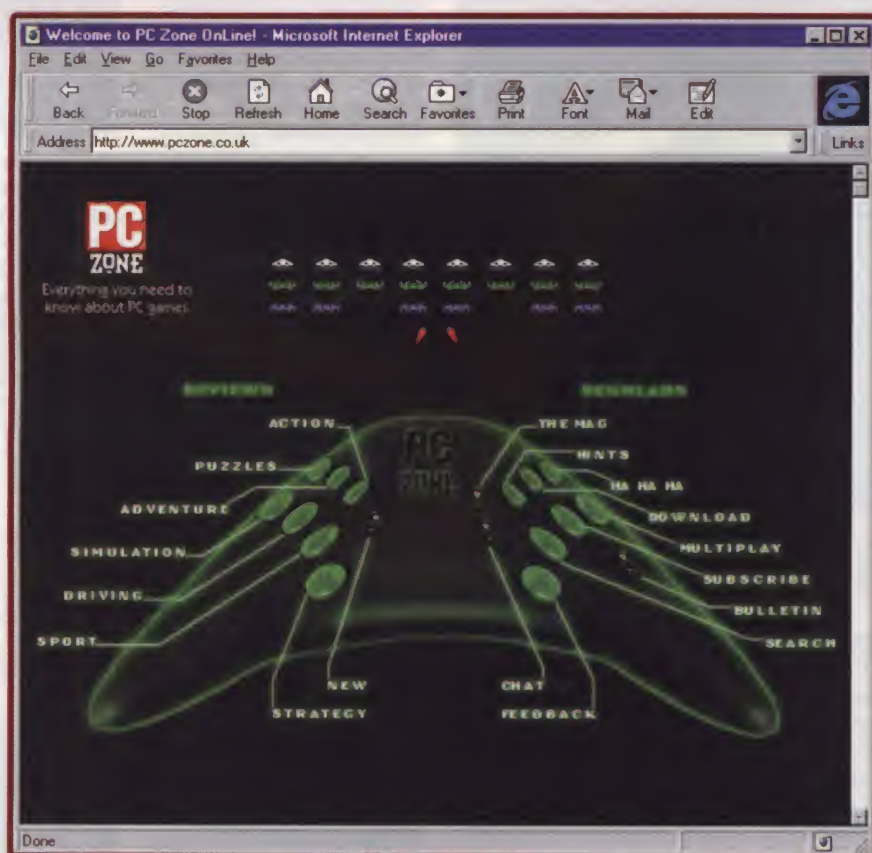
A Simply hold the shift key and type 'TWINSEN'S BACK'. Before you know it, the game will be over and you'll be screaming for your money back. Ho hum. [E2]

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ON THE CD

This month's CD is filled to bursting with a wealth of demos, patches, bug fixes, tips... and even a movie!

★ WORDS Richie Shoemaker • DISKMEISTER Dan Emery

HELP!

CD trouble? HD playing up? Don't worry – phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto!

HD DISK HELP Phone Matthew on 01274 736990 Any weekday between 9am and 4pm

CD-ROM HELP Phone ABT on 01708 250250 or pczone@abt-net.demon.co.uk Any weekday between 9:30am and 5pm and Saturday from 10am to 2pm. (Please do not phone the PC Zone office as we're too busy putting the mag together to answer your calls.)

BEFORE YOU DIAL... If you are calling either helpline, then please take note of the following points:

- ★ If possible have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call.
- ★ If this is not possible, note down all relevant information ie system type, sound card, RAM etc, plus the nature of the fault.
- ★ Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant info.

NO CD?

If you don't have the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclose your HDs from the cover plus a cheque for a whole £1 and send it to:

CD Exchange (65), PC Zone, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ

YOUR DETAILS (please print clearly)

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ADDRESS:

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Please make cheques payable to: DENNIS PUBLISHING LTD.

★ CDs from previous issues are also available – call 01789 490213.



DEMOS + SHAREWARE

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

- ★ You'll need at least a Pentium 133 with 16Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM.
- ★ Many of the programs are designed to run under Windows 95 and, as a result, some of them may require a Pentium 166 with 32Mb RAM to run satisfactorily. Please note that some games also require a 3D accelerator card to run.
- ★ Use the browser and menu system to see which demos are Windows 95, DOS and 3D accelerator only.



X-COM INTERCEPTOR

MicroProse

CHECK OUT THE REVIEW ON PAGE 84

Interceptor takes the epic X-COM saga to the next level, and you can find out how exactly with our exclusive demo. The controls at the right of the screen determine how fast time goes by in the game universe. You can either play about with the limited demo version of the strategy side of the game, or speed the game up and wait for an alien ship to arrive. When this happens, choose to send all three ships on the mission, choose which ship you want to fly in, speed time up again and elect to attack the alien fleet. You'll

now find yourself in the cockpit of an Interceptor. The alien ships are pretty damn fast in the demo version (beginner level doesn't work), but rest assured that the full game is a lot easier. As soon as you complete the mission, the demo will end – but hey, you can always load it up again!

Controls: Joystick/mouse/keyboard
CURSORS – Directional control
ENTER – Fire laser
Numpad ENTER – Fire missile
X – Link weapons
B – Tractor beam
ESCAPE – Abort

TEAM APACHE Mindscape



Come in Longbow 2, your time could well be up. Mindscape's helicopter sim is certainly the most accessible we've seen in quite a while. Check out the review on page 98, then take to the skies against the Russian ground forces.

Controls: Joystick/keyboard
Keypad 2/4/6/8 – Directional control (NumLock on)
</> – Yaw left/right
=/÷ – Throttle
E – Start engines
Ctrl+E – Toggle engines when on the ground
A – Turn on autopilot
H – Turn on auto hover
Tab – Turn off autopilot or auto hover
CONTROL & L – Toggle wing lights
Z – Emergency hydraulics
M – Arm all weapons
G – Switch between LOAL/LOBL firing modes for Hellfire
SPACE – Fire weapon
BACKSPACE – Toggle weapons
J – Increases the burst limit of your current weapon
K – Decreases the burst limit of your current weapon
U – Store the ground co-ordinates of what is in your gunsight
SHIFT & U – Order artillery attack at stored co-ordinates
INSERT – Co-pilot gunner cycle to next target
DELETE – Co-pilot gunner fixed to current target
C – Dispense chaff
F – Dispense flares
F1-F10 – Views
F11 – Missile view
F12 – In-flight map
CURSORS – Rotate outside views
D – Toggle look down cockpit
I – Infrared
V – Cockpit light toggle

CURSORS – Move head (cockpit view only)
P – Pause
O – Options screen
ESCAPE – End mission
 For wingman/network commands refer to readme.txt

WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER '98

Eidos



Play a full 90 minutes from the World Cup opener between Brazil and Scotland in this close contender to World Cup '98. Supports 3Dfx, Direct3D and software modes, and you can even try a one- or two-player game. Play it, then read all about in on page 103.

Controls: Gamepad/keyboard
CURSORS – Player movement
O – Kick/header
P – Pass/tackle
[– Shoot/volley
O – Thru ball/chest
_ – Cross
= – Sprint
ENTER – Menu

TRIPLE PLAY 99 EA Sports



Up to eight human or computer-controlled players can step up to the plate in EA's latest baseball sim. The demo is a home run derby, which means you have to get as many home runs as possible in eight attempts. Not a bad demo for those after-pub hours. (PCZ #64, 90%)



Controls: Gamepad/keyboard/
mouse

F1-F5 – Change camera views

F6 – Ball view

ESC – Options

A/S/D – Swing

MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS

Microsoft



Obese in body and mind, Americans also have a soft spot for vehicles that have been bloated and stretched out of all logical proportions. Meaty, beaty, big and bouncy – try two laps of this demo, choosing one of four trucks. The latest version is reviewed on page 109.

Controls: Joystick/gamepad/
keyboard

CURSORS – Accelerate,
brake/reverse and steering, A/Z
Gears

INSERT/DELETE – Look left/right

+ – Look behind

SPACE – Horn

V – Change view

K – View other trucks

ADDITION PINBALL

MicroProse



**CHECK OUT THE REVIEW
ON PAGE 113**

Without a doubt one of the better pinball games available at the moment. This time-limited table is based on the excellent *Worms 2* and features samples and

WORLD CUP '98

EA Sports

CHECK OUT THE REVIEW ON PAGE 100

Just as they drop the license for FIFA, EA come up with a brilliant football sim. Based on last year's *Road To The World Cup*, this new game offers a host of new features. A blatant cash-in perhaps, but it's the best soccer game you'll find. Play two minutes as England take on champions Brazil or, go to www.fifagaming.com and download a patch to play as Arsenal versus Newcastle. Reviewed page 100.

Controls: Gamepad/keyboard

ESC – Main menu

F1-F8 – Camera views

5 – Match stats

6 – Scoring summary

7 – Foul summary

8 – Toggle radar

+/- – Toggle screen size

Y – Toggle field detail

T – Toggle stadium detail

CURSORS – Movement

A – Lob (slide tackle)

S – Pass (switch player)

D – Shot (tackle)

W – Sprint

E – Through pass

Q – Jump tackle (intentional foul)

Left SHIFT – Held down with above keys does a skill mode move

SPACE – Toggles between default, offensive and defensive formations

graphics taken from Team 17's classic.

Controls: Keyboard

RETURN – Launch ball

Left SHIFT – Left flipper

Right SHIFT – Right flipper

Left ALT – Nudge left

Right ALT – Nudge right

SPACE – Nudge up

P – Pause

ESCAPE – Quit

C – LED transparency

L – LED toggle

COMANCHE GOLD

NovaLogic



**CHECK OUT THE REVIEW
ON PAGE 113**

This demo features one of the 40 spanking new missions that have been added to *Comanche 3.0*.

TAB – Target hold

O – Target heading

P – Target priority

BACKSPACE – Break target lock

SPACE – Fire weapon

[/] – Cycle weapon selection

Z – Select cannon

X – Select rocket

V – Select hellfire

C – Select stinger

B – Request artillery support

N – Team-mate targeting

M – Team-mate orders

GRAND PRIX LEGENDS

Cendant



Try a practice session from Cendant's up-and-coming racing sim. Three classic cars are available to drive around the Watkins Glen circuit of 1967 – before most of us were born.

Controls: Joystick/keyboard

Shift & R – Resets car

F10 – Toggles between chase view and cockpit view

CURSORS – Steering, throttle and brakes

DELETE – Clutch

Z/X – Look left/right

SPACE – Raise arm

C – View pit board

SEVEN KINGDOMS: ANCIENT ADVERSARIES

Interactive Magic



Twelve tutorials and two brand-spanking-new scenarios are available in this addition to Interactive Magic's real-time

strategy game. The original game scored a fairly average 68% back in issue 60, so it remains to be seen whether this will improve things. See what you think.

Controls: Mouse

OUTWARS

Microsoft



Borrowing heavily from *Starship Troopers*, *Outwars* (PCZ #64, 86%) is a fine 3D action game featuring loads of ugly alien bugs and flying around barren vistas in jet-packs. Try out this two-mission demo, taking care not to blow away your two buddies.

Controls: Joystick/keyboard/mouse

CURSORS – Movement and direction control

END/PG DOWN – Sidestep/roll left/right

SPACE – Rocket pack/jump

Left SHIFT – Move modifier

G – Glider wing toggle

Left CONTROL – Fire

</> – Cycle weapons

1-6 – Select weapon

ENTER/BACKSPACE – Lock/unlock target

W/S – Aim up/down

A/D – Aim left/right

E – Centre aim

TAB – Advanced aim modifier

CAPSLOCK – Advanced aim toggle

F3-F9 – VR modes

I/K/J/L – Rotate camera

U – Reset camera

Q – Camera modifier

L – Helmet light

R – Tracker

M – Map

H – HUD

O – Mission objective

C – Team command menu

N – Score display

T – Talk to all

Y – Talk to team-mates

F1 – Help

ESC – Options





FRONT PAGE SPORTS: TROPHY RIVERS Cendant



Sorry, can't help you with this one. Being a horrible and barbaric pastime – and seeing as the PC in *PC Zone* stands for 'politically correct' – we can't offer any help at all with Cendant's fishing sim. Play it in private and don't tell a soul.

Controls: Mouse

WARBREEDS Red Orb



This new version of Red Orb's real-time strategy gene-splicing game (*PCZ* #61, 80%) contains training campaign, two multi-player maps and entry to the device lab and gene lab screens, which are accessible from the main screen.

Controls: Mouse/keyboard

ESC – Main menu on/off

SHIFT – Fast scroll/add units to current selection

SPACE – Hold down while moving units to keep formation

A – Auto-target closest enemy creature

Z – Zoom in/out

E – Select all creatures in view

S – Stop command to current selection

N – Select next friendly creature

L – Toggle follow-lock mode

O – Toggle power zone viewing mode

HOME – Centre on selection

A – Hold down to move in parallel line formation

TAB – Set way points

CONTROL & O-9 – Set selection into hot keys

O-9 – Select all creatures of the numbered hot key

CONTROL & X – Explore the map

H/V – Horizontal/vertical selection

Y – Options dialog box

+/- – Resize mini-map

HARDBALL 6 Accolade/EA



Another baseball demo, this one giving you the chance of both fielding and batting. Play an entire exhibition game between the Cleveland Indians and Florida. Some of the game controls can be quite tricky to explain, so make sure you take a look at the accompanying readme file.

Controls: Gamepad/keyboard/mouse

CURSORS – Select a pitch/hit

ENTER – Pitch/hit

ALT & F4 – Close game

ALT & ENTER – Toggle screen size

1-5 – Select view

6/7 – Cycle through outfield alignments

F7 – Perspective rendering toggle

F8 – Pan and zoom toggle

REAL GOLF Shareware



This is as real as it gets. With its *Golf Pro* gameplay, *Real Golf* simulates the game by

incorporating a realistic swing method that requires two mouse pads placed end to end. Unfortunately, the graphics are terrible, but there's something very appealing about it. Maybe it's the way in which you can drive around in a golf cart. Fully featured one-day demo.

Controls: Mouse/keyboard

Mouse – Swing club

LMB – Re-centre club

RMB – Leave ball

F1-F12 – Select club

UP/DOWN – Change view

LEFT/RIGHT – Change aim

CONTROL & Z – Toggle putting grid

CONTROL & H – Help

PHAROAH'S ASCENT Shareware



Ooh look, someone's hijacked a villager from *Age Of Empires* and put him in a platform game. Play this demo long enough and he'll probably turn around and say "Unnaroi". When you start, the game will run through the first level to show you what to do. Finish the other levels to escape the pyramid.

Controls: Gamepad/keyboard

CURSORS – Movement

SPACE – Jump

CONTROL – Fire

METAL KNIGHTS '98 KnightSoft



Massive multi-player turn-based strategy game that can be played both over the Internet and across a local network. Create units, mine resources and explore. And if you play against computer opponents, register. A tutorial and help file are included.

Controls: Mouse

DINK SMALLWOOD RT Soft



Smack some pigs up in this two-town shareware version of the medieval action/adventure. Have a root around, talk to people and

see what's up. The registered version enables you to create your own adventures.

Controls: Keyboard/gamepad

CURSORS – Walk/push

CTRL – Attack/use equipped item/select option

SPACE – Talk/examine/manipulate

SHIFT – Use equipped magic

ENTER – Inventory

ESC – Options

M – Map

ALT & Q – Quit

SWARM Reflexive Entertainment



We love *Asteroids* and obviously other people do too, otherwise we wouldn't get great demos like this reappearing. Using the mouse to control the ship, the game is incredibly intuitive to play and perhaps one of the few worth registering.

Controls: Mouse/keyboard

Mouse – Heading and thrust

LMB – Fire weapon 1

RMB – Fire weapon 2

Z/A – Cycle weapon 1

X/S – Cycle weapon 2



EXTENDED PLAY

Files to make your current games last longer. Don't worry if your favourite game isn't covered yet – it could well feature in the next issue

CHECK OUT EXTENDED ON PAGE 164

You will need to have WinZip set up on your machine to install some of these enhancements. Note: some of these files may alter your original files. You install these programs at your own risk.

CIVILISATION II

Included here is a mighty fine multi-player add-on that enables you to play either over a network or the Internet. The program is a standalone install and includes its own help file.

MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS

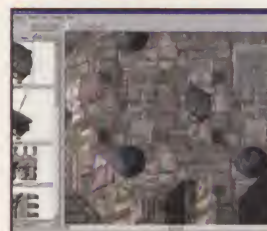
There are a number of enhancements, including new tracks, a track editor and new vehicles. Double-click the desired icon and follow the on-screen instructions.

C&C: RED ALERT

This is a plan file that enables you to change various options in the game. Open up the .ini file by double-clicking on the icon, and read the top bit which tells you

how to make the changes. Once done, just save the file to your Red Alert directory. Make sure you back up the original one – you don't want to overwrite it.

TOTAL ANNIHILATION



Extra maps and other odds and sods for Cavedog's superb *C&C* clone. The files will automatically locate where *TA* is installed, except for the new units which will extract to a temporary

directory where you can run the .exe files separately.

WARCRAFT II: TIDES OF DARKNESS

New maps, editors and desktop themes for Blizzard's fantasy strategy game. Follow the on-screen instructions to install them.

X-COM: APOCALYPSE

Fancy creating maps for the latest Gollop creation? Install this fully featured TACEDIT utility by unzipping the files to a temporary directory, and then unzipping the tacedit.zip file and running install.bat. Readme files are included if you get stuck.



3D SO REAL IT MUST BE RIGHTEOUS

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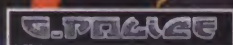
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PATCHES

A bunch of patches any self-respecting gamehead wouldn't dare be without

Many of the patches are self-extracting – the installation program will automatically detect where the full game is installed, and you just follow the on-screen instructions. Some of the patches will extract to a /patches directory on your C:\ drive. In this case, run the patch from there or take a look at the accompanying readme file.

AGE OF EMPIRES 1.0B

The latest patch for Microsoft's real-time strategy game that you'll need if you want to play on the Wireplay games network.

BATTLEZONE 1.01

Multiple bug-fix for Activision's 3D real-time strategy/action game. Updates the retail version to 1.01.

BLOOD

A great 3Dfx patch for the wonderfully gruesome 3D shoot 'em up. The patch extracts to a temporary directory from where you can run the installation. You will need 32Mb RAM for the patch to work.

BURNOUT: CHAMPIONSHIP DRAG RACING

Two physics improvement patches for fans of Bethesda's straight-line racing sim. The patches extract to a temporary directory from where you can run the installation file.

DEADLOCK II: SHRINE WARS

The much-needed AI bug fix for EA's sci-fi strategy game. Also included is a fully working game editor.

DUNGEON KEEPER

Everyone's favourite goblin-slap-fest gets the Direct3D overhaul. Owners of the Gold Edition will already have the patch, and now the rest of you can bring Peter Molyneux's Bullfrog swansong bang up to date. The file will extract to the /patches directory. Read the accompanying text file for full instructions.

ENTREPRENEUR

Updates the original version to 1.2, and addresses previous multi-player, speed and AI problems.

EVOLUTION

Add the planet Earth to this strategy simulation. Works in multi-player mode as well.

F1 RACING SIM

Four patches for Ubisoft's excellent racing sim. The first, v1.08, is a bug fix for owners of 3Dfx cards. The second is a Direct3D graphics improvement. The other two updates are for 3D sound and DirectSound.

F1'97

3Dfx bug fix for impatient owners of Voodoo 2 cards. Unzips to /patches directory.

INTERSTATE '76

The Gold patch includes new art, horizon maps, 3D support and also adds levels of difficulty – not that it needed it.

JAZZ JACKRABBIT 2

This update for the shareware version improves both single and Internet play.

LORDS OF MAGIC

Owners of either the retail version or version 2.0 of Cendant's fantasy game can upgrade to version 2.02.

SEGA TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

Upgrade this arcade conversion to version 1.02.

STARCRAFT

Stop multi-player cheating with 1.01 patch. It also fixes a number of other minor problems.

TOTAL ANNIHILATION

Massive upgrade that adds multi-player resource sharing and includes a few new units. You can upgrade to this (version 3.0) from any previous version, but your old savegames will be incompatible.

WING COMMANDER PROPHECY

Update patch for despairing owners of Voodoo 1 and Voodoo 2 cards.

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 97/98

They're back again and in full working order, too (sorry 'bout that). Unzip the relevant file to the /patches directory and make sure you follow the instructions in the readme text file, as some patches will render your old savegames incompatible.

WIREPLAY

The latest version of the Wireplay client software, including QuakeWorld 2.10, DirectPlay 5.0a and a few deathmatch Quake/Quake II modifications, among them; Assassin, Jailbreak CTF and Rocket Arena. Install these and get connected. You may just find yourself playing against us one day.

PC ZONE TIPS DATABASE

Click on the Editorial tab in the browser and you'll find our new cheats and tips database with over 1,200 game tips. Also in the database – which will grow month by month – are walkthroughs and hints for many recent games. In addition, you'll also find the latest game shots for all the titles we can't wait to see.

ESCHATON: DARKENING TWILIGHT

Check out the feature on page 50 for a glimpse behind the scenes of the making of this award-winning Quake movie, courtesy of Hugh Hancock. To view it you'll need a registered version of Quake as well as the WinQuake application. (See the Complete Quake CD from our Christmas issue or visit <http://gamesdomain.uol.com.br/patches/wq100.html> to download the latest version.)

You'll need to install both the files to a directory within Quake (NOT Quake2 as prompted in the browser). Run the movie by typing `c:\quake\winquake.exe -game <dir>` into the Run command line (where <dir> is the name of the Eschaton directory). Oscar-winning? Er... nope

GOT THE FLOPPY DISK VERSION?

Because floppy disks only contain a fraction of the information contained on a CD-ROM, there ain't a lot on the PC Zone floppies. Maybe you should think about upgrading!

32-CARD BRIDGE Shareware

No one in the office has any clue what bridge is all about. Thankfully, a full tutorial is included to help you master the game in preparation for middle age. Give in.

Controls: Mouse

CROSSWORD CHALLENGER Shareware

You don't have to wait for your tea-break to get back to The Sun crossword – now you can load it up on your PC at work/home/classroom and be the envy of your mates (snigger).

Controls: Mouse/keyboard



ESSENTIALS + ON-LINE

A round-up of handy utilities, browsers and other useful Net stuff

EZ Desk '95 v1.7

Superb application for saving desktop configurations. Useful for when you crash out of games.

Paint Shop Pro v5

The latest and greatest shareware

paint program. Useful for creating skins for Quake (see part two of our special feature next month).

WinZip v6.3

Essential archiving utility no-one should be without.

DirectX v5.2

Drivers essential to run all the latest games and demos.

DirectPlay v5.0a

Microsoft on-line drivers for Internet-based multi-players.

Glide v2.43/3Dfx Voodoo 2

drivers

The latest drivers for Voodoo 1 and Voodoo 2 graphics cards.

SciTech Display Doctor v6.0

Graphics card playing up? Try a course of this for 30 days.

Ameol v2.12

Latest version of the CIX on-line conferencing software.

GetRight 3.1

A soothing cure for those downloading headaches.

Kali95

Popular Internet gaming software.

Internet Explorer 4.01

Microsoft's malignant world-domineering Internet browser.

Netscape Navigator 4.05

The latest version of Zone's favourite Net browser.

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Welcome to the PC Zone Top 100. Here you'll find the games that in our expert opinion are the current top PC games in their field, as well as a few extras you might like to consider if you're a big fan of the genre.

Meanwhile, if golf is your thing then check out page 154 where we take a lingering look at the best golf games money can buy

ACTION GAMES



QUAKE II

PCZ #59 • 97%

➤ The sequel to "the most important PC game ever" turns out to be more than worth the wait. Despite the odd bit of slowdown, single-player and deathmatch games are in a league of their own. As Macca concluded in his review: "*Quake II* is pretty much perfect." Buy it now.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



JEDI KNIGHT: DARK FORCES II

PCZ #55 • 94%

➤ It's not *Quake*, but then it doesn't even try to be. But it is a compelling, technically superb blend of action and exploration neatly wrapped up in the *Star Wars* universe. Altogether most impressive.
PUBLISHER LucasArts/VE • 0171 368 2255



FADE TO BLACK

PCZ #31 • 94%

➤ The unofficial sequel to the excellent *Flashback*, this is a near-perfect blend of third-person exploration and combat action. The technical precursor to the fantastic *Tomb Raider*, it's a classic in its own right.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING

PCZ #44 • 94%

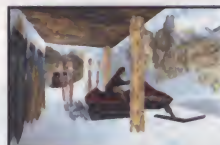
➤ The ultimate mix of space combat, *Elite*-style trading and FMV action, *Privateer 2* was the first big budget release from Origin which used live action in a positive way. Absolutely packed with stars, this is pukka stuff.
PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442



TIE FIGHTER

PCZ #18 • 94%

➤ *TIE Fighter* is still rated by many as the finest space combat sim ever to be released. It succeeds because it successfully blends all the kudos of *Star Wars* with a wicked new engine for super-fast TIE on X-Wing fisticuffs.
PUBLISHER LucasArts/VE • 0171 368 2255



TOMB RAIDER II

PCZ #57 • 94%

➤ The first game broke the mould, but the sequel even improves on the original. *Tomb Raider II* sports a curvier Lara, massive new levels to explore and a tidier control system. The game comes with native 3Dfx support and looks better than ever.
PUBLISHER Core/Eidos • 0181 636 3000



HEXEN II

PCZ #54 • 94%

➤ The long-awaited, hub-based gib-fest sweeps into action with its trusty sword, hoping to carve a big 'H' on the chest of its older cousin, *Quake*. This is a first-person hack 'em off with balls as well as a big chopper.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



FORSAKEN

PCZ #63 • 94%

➤ *Descent* is dead and *Forsaken* is now king of the tunnel-based shoot 'em ups. With huge, varied levels, heaps of graphical effects, weapons and a fantastic multi-player LAN-based game, it's up there with the best of 'em.
PUBLISHER Acclaim • 0171 344 5000



DUKE NUKEM 3D

PCZ #40 • 93%

➤ The debate rages on, and there are still a lot of people who rate *Duke* over *Quake*. It's not as technically impressive, but brags gameplay by the bucketload in one-player mode and when played over a network.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



INCOMING

PCZ #63 • 90%

➤ *Rage*'s awesome all-action arcade epic is quite possibly the best-looking action game we've seen this year. If you've got the hardware and want to get your hands on non-stop action and a dose of strategy, this is a must-buy.
PUBLISHER Rage • 0121 452 8400



QUAKE Activision • PCZ #43 • 96%

TOMB RAIDER Eidos • PCZ #45 • 95%

DESCENT II • Interplay • PCZ #37 • 90%

JEDI KNIGHT: MYSTERIES OF THE SITH LucasArts • PCZ #62 • 95%

MDK Interplay • PCZ #50 • 90%

LAST BRONX Sega • PCZ #62 • 87%

MAGIC CARPET II Electronic Arts • PCZ #32 • 92%

DRIVING GAMES

**CARMAGEDDON****PCZ #50 • 95%**

★ Awesome arcade-style racer that's heavy on the hit 'n' run and gameplay. Loads of different cars to choose from, plenty of tracks, three ways to play and a fab multi-player network mode make this one of the most entertaining driving games ever.

PUBLISHER SCI • 0171 585 3308

**FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2****PCZ #36 • 95%**

★ The amazing sequel to the greatest F1 driving sim ever. Updated brilliantly for the 94/95 season with all-new detailed circuits, cars and teams. Will run on a 486 DX2 but you'll need a Pentium to run the hi-res mode.

PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893

**NETWORK Q RAC RALLY****PCZ #44 • 94%**

★ The seminal rally racer from Europress is the ultimate in skiddy, slidey action. 27 (count 'em) stages, loads of cars, a fantastic eight-way network option and varied terrain and conditions make this superior to the limited *Sega Rally*. Go buy it!

PUBLISHER Europress Software • 01625 859444

**F1 RACING SIMULATION****PCZ #59 • 93%**

★ The sheer depth of realism is what makes *F1 Racing Sim* such an outstanding experience to play. Not only that, but it looks an absolute treat too – especially 3Dfx-ed up. Ubi Soft practically sprung up from nowhere and took the lead from the established names in the genre.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 0181 944 9000

**NASCAR RACING 2****PCZ #46 • 92%**

★ A worthy upgrade featuring a new, smoother 3D engine, improved opponent AI, more controllable cars, a simple single-screen car set-up and a multi-player network option. The constant stream of headset messages adds atmosphere. A racing sim fan's must.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

**GRAND THEFT AUTO****PCZ #58 • 92%**

★ This is the game that took over from *Carmageddon* as the media's favourite pet hate. Steal cars, dodge police, mow down pedestrians and cause mayhem in city streets in one of the most addictive driving games ever. *Micro Machines* on acid.

PUBLISHER BMG • 0171 973 0011

**F1 97****PCZ #62 • 92%**

★ The long-awaited sequel to the excellent PlayStation conversion proved to be worth the wait, with improved driver AI, lush graphics, a split-screen mode and more ludicrous commentary from Murray Walker. Fantastic.

PUBLISHER Psygnosis (0151 282 3000)

**MICRO MACHINES 3****PCZ #64 • 90%**

NEW ENTRY The manic miniature racing game gets the 3D treatment and loses nothing along the way. The new power-ups might not please the purist, but this is still one of the finest two-player games around.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

**MOTORHEAD****PCZ #63 • 90%**

★ With drop-dead graphics and a blistering frame rate, this is a ridiculously fast, fab-looking, intense racing experience. Add a great LAN-based option (Local Area Network) and *Motorhead* is the ace of arcade racers.

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 01142 753 423

**ULTIM@TE RACE PRO****PCZ #62 • 88%**

★ This is quite possibly one of the slickest arcade racers we've ever seen. The handling of the cars might be a little erratic, but the game itself is tremendous fun, especially when you play in deathmatch mode over a LAN.

PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893

SPORTS GAMES

**LINKS LS****PCZ #43 • 94%**

★ The classic golf sim gets an update, and unsurprisingly it's fab. There's more options, luscious graphics, a redesigned menu and a view selection system. There's even a built-in upgrader for all the old data disk courses you splashed out on.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

**NHL 98****PCZ #57 • 94%**

★ Another year, another *NHL*, but this one isn't just the best ice hockey game, it's one of the best sports games we've ever seen. Super 3Dfx-ed graphics, fantastic animation and awesome presentation make this a sports title not to be missed.

PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

**PGA TOUR PRO****PCZ #55 • 94%**

★ Nothing really distinguishes this version from the last, except for the brilliant and very easy to use internet play facility. Waste no time, go and thwack some Americans right now. Remember: Your country needs you.

PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

**PETE SAMPRAS TENNIS 97****PCZ #53 • 92%**

★ This game doesn't quite better *Super Tennis* on the SNES, but it's as close as you'll get on the PC. The simple control system means it's instantly playable, but we may as well tell you now that the women's skirts still don't fly up when they serve.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

**PRO PINBALL: TIMESHOCK!****PCZ #53 • 91%**

★ Remember *Pro Pinball: The Web*? This, the second title in the series, is better in every way. Improved ball dynamics, detail and sound effects, and of course there's the return of the world's dirtiest computer game voice telling you to "Lock those balls".

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337

**NBA LIVE 98****PCZ #60 • 90%**

★ With even better graphics and commentary than before, it's one of the best-looking PC sports games. This version sports 'realistic' faces and players of different heights – it's by far the best basketball game available.

PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

**VIRTUAL POOL 2****PCZ #54 • 90%**

★ Okay, so *Virtual Pool 2* scored one per cent less than its predecessor, but this follow-up beats it hands down. 3Dfx support goes some way to pushing the series further, and the inclusion of English Pub rules make it a more essential purchase than before.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666

**ACTUA SOCCER 2****PCZ #59 • 90%**

★ Instantly accessible footie action in this latest instalment of Gremlin's high profile *Actua* series. Great graphics, easy control and a hidden Super Furry Animals team confirm *Actua 2*'s 'must have' status.

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 01142 753423

**THE GOLF PRO****PCZ #62 • 90%**

★ If you're bored with either *PGA* or *Links*, then this is the best of the 'mouse-swing' bunch. Good course design and some excellent tuition means there's loads of gameplay, though the putting lets it down a tad.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337

**MADDEN NFL 98****PCZ #59 • 87%**

★ This latest PC incarnation is well up to the quality seen on the console versions, with all the features and slick presentation we now expect as standard for an EA Sports release. When it comes down to it, it doesn't really get any better than this.

PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

ALSO
CONSIDER

INDYCAR 2 Cendant • PCZ #34 • 90%

SCREAMER 2 Virgin • PCZ #45 • 93%

DESTRUCTION DERBY 2 Psygnosis • PCZ #46 • 86%

INTERSTATE 76: NITRO RIDERS Activision • PCZ #63 • 87%

TOCA: TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP Europress • PCZ #59 • 86%

ALSO
CONSIDER

★ There's always a swell of different sports game types depending on the current sporting season. This month's footie collection, starting on page 100, offers a guide to the latest World Cup-related offerings, but others include...

TRIPLE PLAY 99 Electronic Arts • PCZ #64 • 90%

TROPHY BASS 2 Cendant • PCZ #50 • 84%

ADVENTURE GAMES



ALONE IN THE DARK 3

PCZ #21 • 95%

★ Better than the previous *AITD* instalments, *Alone 3* is a tense, ambient tale of Navajo Indian magic and reincarnation that unfolds in the usual *AITD* manner. This is now available as part of a compilation budget pack.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0181 738 8199



BIOFORGE

PCZ #25 • 95%

★ Futuristic *Alone In The Dark*-style game with impressive graphics, puzzles and soundtrack. Often preferred over *AITD* games as its unique blend of arcade combat is explosive. The only drag is EA's refusal to make a sequel for it.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



SYSTEM SHOCK

PCZ #35 • 95%

★ This futuristic first-person cyberpunk adventure from the makers of *Ultima* was initially overlooked by many people. Now available on budget, this is a must-buy for those new to the genre. The graphics might be a little dated, but the atmosphere is still invigorating.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



DISCWORD II

PCZ #44 • 93%

★ Perfect Entertainment's immaculate sequel to *Discworld* follows would-be wizard Rincewind in his search for the Grim Reaper. Not as hard as the first game, but bigger and better looking. *Discworld II* is a universally appealing adventure game.

PUBLISHER Psygnosis • 0151 282 3000



INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS

PCZ #37 • 93%

★ Follow a post-*Raiders* Indy in his search for the submerged metropolis. Three ways to play make for a high replayability factor, and the inter-character banter is brilliant.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/VE • 0171 368 2255



LBA 2: TWINSEN'S ODYSSEY

PCZ #54 • 93%

★ Twinsen is back – this time to thwart those pesky Esmers in this sumptuous sequel. The huge play area in *LBA 2*, coupled with seamlessly linked puzzles, creates a great-looking and hugely atmospheric adventure. A must for adventure fans.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



SAM & MAX

PCZ #11 • 93%

★ The hilarious dog/rabbit duo's first and only PC outing, in which they need to solve a host of bizarre puzzles. An all-talkie adventure with a gag-laden script, this is an essential budget-priced purchase even if you're not a point-and-click fan.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/VE • 0171 368 2255



THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND

PCZ #58 • 92%

★ The third game in LucasArts' classic *Monkey* saga delivers the goods big-time, much to the new benchmark for point-and-click adventure games.

PUBLISHER VE • 0171 368 2255



STARSHIP TITANIC

PCZ #63 • 91%

★ Douglas Adams's epic adventure is an innovative piece of software filled with everything that's right about adventure games. With its lush visuals and an innovative user interface, *Starship Titanic* is a must-buy for adventure fans.

PUBLISHER Zblac Entertainment • 01626 332233

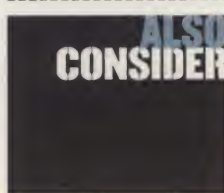


ECSTATICA II

PCZ #48 • 91%

★ We dubbed it "an adventure with balls". It's hard, but it's one of the most rewarding adventures we've ever seen. It constantly surprises and is sure to keep even the most battle-weary adventure fan busy for weeks.

PUBLISHER Psygnosis • 0151 282 3000



FULL THROTTLE Virgin • PCZ #27 • 92%

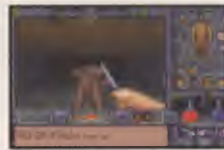
THE PANDORA DIRECTIVE Virgin • PCZ #43 • 92%

TOONSTRUCK Virgin • PCZ #45 • 93%

GABRIEL KNIGHT 2: THE BEAST WITHIN Cendant • PCZ #36 • 88%

LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE Electronic Arts • PCZ #33 • 93%

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES



ULTIMA UNDERWORLD 2: LABYRINTH OF WORLDS

PCZ #1 • 94%

★ This improves on almost every aspect of its prequel, *The Stygian Abyss*. You explore a complex, ever-evolving dungeon; it has unsurpassed atmosphere and interaction.

PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442



REALMS OF THE HAUNTING

PCZ #47 • 93%

★ Although overlooked by many fans of the genre, our Mallo gave it a whopping 93 per cent when he reviewed it back in issue 47. Still well worth a look if you happen to see it going cheap, *ROTH* is a well cool mix of adventure and RPG.

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 01142 753423



LANDS OF LORE: GUARDIANS OF DESTINY

PCZ #56 • 92%

★ Four long years in the making, Westwood Studios' mammoth new adventure proved more than worth the wait. Sumptuous visuals and a tremendous atmosphere combine to make it an instant classic.

PUBLISHER VE • 0171 368 2255



FALLOUT

PCZ #61 • 91%

★ This surprised everyone in the office, proving to be both addictive and well conceived. Give it a chance and you'll discover that *Fallout* is a rewarding RPG which'll keep you entertained for hours. Not quite on a par with the mighty *Ultima* series, but then what is?

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



ULTIMA VII

PCZ #35 • 89%

★ Arguably the best of all the *Ultima* games, *Ultima VII* blends character interaction and the exploration of the world of Britannia. The last *Ultima* series to give complete party control. Check out the *Ultima Collection* for a real treat.

PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442



DIABLO

PCZ #48 • 88%

★ Standard hack 'n' slash fare, but pulled off with such style that it's addictive. A great storyline compensates for repetitive arcade combat and supremely detailed animation makes it a superb coffee-table game.

PUBLISHER Zblac/Blizzard • 01626 332233



TERRIS

PCZ #35 • 88%

★ A MUD in the old-school style of text-based RPGs, but it's so addictive that we're still playing it. The various quests, puzzles and monsters will keep you going for days. The gameplay is excellent, if you can handle the 'texty-ness'.

PUBLISHER AOL • 0800 279 7444



MERIDIAN 59

PCZ #35 • 86%

★ This ground-breaking on-line RPG enables thousands of people to interact with each other in the same fantasy universe at the same time. Garish and horrible graphics aside, *Meridian 59* remains one of the best on-line multi-player RPGs around.

PUBLISHER 3DO Company • 0181 296 1949



RAVENLOFT: STONE PROPHET

PCZ #35 • 78%

★ This is better than SSI's previous AD&D *Ravenloft* RPGs. You have to battle through a landscape populated by stone golems and scorpions. The graphics are pretty average, but the intuitive spell/combat system is a joy.

PUBLISHER Mindscape • 01444 246333



ULTIMA UNDERWORLD: THE STYGIAN ABYSS

PRE-PC ZONE

★ This took role-playing games away from first-person tile-based RPGs. Amazing architecture, witty characterisations, layers of storyline and the best ending of any game in history.

PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442



★ These are the cream of the crop, largely because RPGs have taken a back seat to other game types over the last couple of years. However, also bear in mind...

DIABLO: HELLFIRE Cendant • PCZ #59 • 82%

ULTIMA COLLECTION Electronic Arts • PCZ #62 • 90%

STRATEGY GAMES

**DUNGEON KEEPER****PCZ #53 • 96%**

★ A game with a genre almost impossible to define, *DK* takes *SimCity 2000*, *C&C* and *Ultima Underworld* and remoulds them into one hell of a title. Fantastic gameplay, and a lifespan on a par with the Queen Mother.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

**SYNDICATE WARS****PCZ #43 • 95%**

★ One of the best strategy games of all time gets a sequel, and what a fabulous sequel it is too. *Syndicate Wars* houses a wealth of intricate levels, gorgeous graphics and enough gratuitous violence to keep anyone happy.

PUBLISHER EA/Bullfrog • 01753 549442

**X-COM 3: APOCALYPSE****PCZ #52 • 95%**

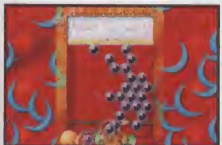
★ A revamped engine and a healthy helping of real-time combat have brought the fantastically addictive *X-COM* series bang up to date. If you like your strategy games deep and meaningful, you should buy *X-COM 3* immediately. It'll keep you busy for weeks.

PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893

**COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT****PCZ #47 • 94%**

★ ...or *C&C* in SVGA with a few new units. It's a testament to the original's gameplay that the sequel can get away with adding few new features and still be such fun to play.

PUBLISHER VIE (0171 368 2255)

**PUZZLE BOBBLE****PCZ #50 • 94%**

★ We can't agree exactly where *Puzzle Bobble* fits – should it go in here, with the *Civs* and *Sims* of the PC gaming world, or in the Action section? But it most certainly deserves to be in our Top 100 section. Totally absorbing and addictive puzzle game.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791

**AGE OF EMPIRES****PCZ #54 • 94%**

★ Imagine *Civilisation 2*'s great empire-building gameplay improved with some excellent graphical touches and comprehensive multi- and single-player options (all in real time). That's *Age Of Empires* in a nutshell.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

**SIMCITY 2000****PCZ #13 • 92%**

★ A classic that deserves its reputation as one of the all-time greats in the strategy world. Build and maintain the city of your dreams and cope with all the problems a real-life Mayor would come up against. It's a lot more fun than it sounds, trust us.

PUBLISHER Maxis • 0171 505 1500

**CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 97/98****PCZ #57 • 90%**

★ The best football management game ever gets its seasonal update and a few added extras – you can now play a number of leagues simultaneously, and edit the existing stats.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

**CIVILIZATION 2****PCZ #36 • 90%**

★ Explore the world, conquer territories and research new technologies in one of the most successful strategy games ever. It's not that different to the first one, but it merits a '90s update and a place here.

PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893

**M1 TANK PLATOON II****PCZ #63 • 90%**

★ Almost a decade after the original, MicroProse released this heavyweight real-time, modern-day combat sim to much critical acclaim. It's deep, heavy going and intense, but well worth the effort. A must for hard-core strategy fans.

PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893898

ALSO
CONSIDER

STARCRAFT Cendant • PCZ #64 • 88%

IMPERIUM GALACTICA GTi • PCZ #53 • 90%

INCUBATION Blue Byte • PCZ #56 • 94%

MASTER OF ORION 2 Microprose • PCZ #45 • 92%

TOTAL ANNIHILATION GTi • PCZ #56 • 92%

WARLORDS III: REIGN OF HEROES Broderbund • PCZ #55 • 90%

SETTLERS 2 Blue Byte • PCZ #41 • 92%

FLIGHT SIMULATION GAMES

**FLIGHT SIM 98****PCZ #55 • 94%**

★ Another year, and yet another flight sim to come from the mighty Microsoft. However, this time, with two new aircraft, a helicopter, hundreds of new airports and hugely impressive 3D acceleration, it's really worth having.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

**F-22 ADF****PCZ #6 • 93%**

★ DID do it again with this awesome new combat sim that leaves the competition firmly on the ground. Graphics and control to die for, it only really lacks a decent campaign. The *Total Air War* add-on pack will make it near perfect.

PUBLISHER Ocean/DID • 0161 832 6633

**LONGBOW 2****PCZ #59 • 92%**

★ "Longbow 2 is challenging, beautiful, exciting and fun – if you're 3Dfx'd up," we said in our review. If you don't have any extra graphics hardware, there's only one thing to do – think 'upgrade', 'upgrade' and 'upgrade'. It'll be worth the investment.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

**JANE'S F-15****PCZ #64 • 92%**

NEWENTRY A hard-core propeller-head's sim that can stand alongside the awesome *Longbow 2* as one of the most realistic flight sims available. Newbies to the genre might find it a bit overwhelming, but it's worth persevering with.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

**US MARINE FIGHTERS****PCZ #30 • 92%**

★ Lovely graphics and a realistic enough flight model. This was originally released as a mission disk for *US Navy Fighters*, but it now comes as part of the *US Navy Fighters Gold* pack, so make sure you go get that instead!

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

**FLYING CORPS****PCZ #59 • 92%**

★ Action-packed WWI flight simulation with neat graphics. Some of you may recall *Red Baron* as one of the greatest WWI flight sims ever – this improves on the old classic to become the best PC WWI sim currently available.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337

**COMANCHE 3****PCZ #51 • 92%**

★ This latest version is the finest we've seen, sporting juicy terrain graphics thanks to a revamped VoxelSpace engine. Despite an accurate flight model, it delivers intense gameplay, and is extremely good fun.

PUBLISHER NovaLogic • 0171 405 1777

**JETFIGHTER III****PCZ #47 • 91%**

★ The follow-up to one of the most popular sims ever. Fly over three and a half million square miles of accurately-mapped terrain of South America. It really is just like being there. Oh yeah, you get to shoot things too, but sadly there's no duty free option.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

**A-10 CUBA!****PCZ #59 • 90%**

★ Functional graphics for a game that really does capture the imagination, mainly because the plane is an absolute joy to fly. Although it's slightly limited due to a lack of a fully-fledged campaign it's still great fun, as well as being pretty speedy on a modest Pentium.

PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

**FLIGHT UNLIMITED II****PCZ #60 • 84%**

★ It can't really compete with the behemoth that is *Flight Sim 98*, and as a result is somewhat limited and claustrophobic. However, it does score highly for being more detailed in its smaller area, and much more fun.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

ALSO
CONSIDER

★ If a flight sim is good, you can bet it'll stay on the shelves for a long time – hence our recommendation for *F22 ADF*. A couple of the more recent releases worth considering include...

AIR WARRIOR III iMagic • PCZ #62 • 80%

F/A-18 KOREA Empire • PCZ #61 • 90%

PCZTOP100SUPERTEST

GOLF GAMES



A course from *Microsoft Golf 98*. Look at that view – it almost makes you believe in God. But not quite.

Despite Tiger Woods, golf is seriously uncool, yet golf sims are one of the biggest-selling genres around. Our resident loud-trousered buffoon, *Patrick McCarthy*, tells you why – and looks at the best games available

THE MINI-RATINGS

In the mini-ratings included after each review...

REALISM refers to how convincingly the ball moves about the screen and reacts with surfaces.

GRAPHICS covers how good the game looks and how well the golfers move.

COURSES covers the number and variety of courses available with the game – you can get very bored playing the same one all the time; but on the other hand, several crap ones are worse.

Each category is rated out of 10; the main score is a percentage. Got that? Good.

One of the best investments you can make when buying games is to get yourself a decent sports simulation, because you can never really 'finish' them. You may win all the trophies to be won, but you can always play with a different team or player, move up to the next difficulty level, or whatever.

But of all the sports games to be had, golf is always among the best. And for two main reasons.

The first is the time factor. Got 15 minutes to spare between signing that million-dollar movie deal and arranging for the delivery of your Bentley Turbo? Play a quick hole of your golf game. Got two days to spare between signing on and a dole-cheque-arrival-day binge down the bread shop? Stick your golf game on and play a four-player skins game with you controlling all four players. Which leads us onto the second point...

GRIND DOWN THE OPPRESSORS!

Sports games in which you can make up your own alter-egos are cool. And with golf games you have to, unless you're happy going through life as a pre-packaged American arsehole called Jimbo or Chuck. Even better, you can make up a player you hate (named after your boss, or Anthea Turner) and have them lose all the time in games against you. Slightly pathetic, yes, but immensely satisfying nonetheless. Especially when you win millions of dollars at the expense of the bastard.

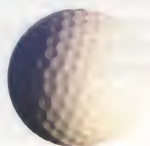
IMPROVE ON REALITY!

There's one other bonus to computer golf, and that's that it's much better than real golf. Believe me, I've done both. Real golf takes months of hard effort and hundreds of pounds worth

of lessons before you're even remotely competent; computer golf takes minutes. Real golf requires that you wear clothing that makes you look like Ronnie Corbett with the colour turned up high on the telly; computer golf lets you wear what the hell you like. You don't have to walk about wearing white shoes with Christmas decorations over the laces, or trousers that look like they're made of Hazard Warning tape. You can sit around in your sweaty, curry-stained vest and three-day-old brown nylon underpants with your balls hanging out of the leg for all computer golf cares. Computer golf won't send some geek with a high-pitched voice, ginger moustache and plastic name badge running after you and squeaking about dress codes.

Real golf takes actual physical effort: walking several miles in the pursuit of it may undermine your heart; humping that enormous bag full of what looks like gynaecological instruments for the larger mammal can play havoc with your back; and God help you if the sun comes out, because you'll end up with a nose so decimated by skin cancer it'll look like a rawhide dog treat. Computer golf enables you to stay indoors, avoiding the sun's harmful rays. Alright, so sitting about in the dark for months on end, pigging out on pizza, chips and full-fat beer may make you resemble the blubber guy at a carnival freakshow, but so what? Get your bedsit window enlarged and charge people to look at you. It's a living, and you'll be earning money while you play golf. You'll be a professional – of sorts.

So, golf games are adaptable, they're convenient – oh, and nowadays they also look very good. Stick one on and your non-computery friends will be really impressed. Who knows, you might even be able to get them into bed as a result. Although obviously you'll need a very big bed if you stick to the aforementioned diet. Now read on...





There are 11 courses, all designed by Jack Nicklaus himself.



Make perverse and disturbing courses with the course designer.



The overhead view of the mouse-swing system in all its glory.



Hualalai: looks nice, but sounds like someone being sick.



Cameras enable you to view proceedings from any angle.



Over 2000 polygons are used to make up each 3D polygon golfer.

JACK NICKLAUS 5

★ £44.99 • Accolade

Nicklaus Golf was looking distinctly long in the tooth the last time I saw it, but this release has brought it bang up to date again. Most importantly, the graphics, which were a bit ropy when the last version appeared, have had a major overhaul. They're now crisp and good quality, while managing to keep the screen as uncluttered as it used to be. It was always one of my favourites back in the old days, and it's really nice to see that it's now worth buying again. The reason I always liked it was simple: the in-built course designer.

You can mess about with this for hours, making anything from a course made entirely of islands where only you know the distance to the next patch of land, or something based on a giant depiction of your next-door neighbour's naked mother, or... well, we haven't got room here to describe exactly how stupid and perverse this enables you to be. But it's great, and this version is far and away the best so far. You select and alter the general landmass and surroundings before you start working on individual holes, and you can even import objects created in paint packages. Plus, with the graphics upgrade, it now all looks really good when you've finished – and given that you can move anywhere on the course to watch as you play a shot, that's important. The only downside is that you'll invariably spend longer making up bizarre courses than playing golf. Speaking of which...

Like *Microsoft Golf*, it enables you to have a three-click, two-click or mouse-movement swing system. The mouse-driven swing is depicted in an unusual way, in that you see the player inset from a top-down viewpoint – like most of the games here, the movement isn't performed by the main golfer 'live', *Golf Pro*-style. It works okay, but like *Actua*, *MS Golf* and the others, it isn't a patch on *The Golf Pro* and isn't completely convincing.

There are many ways to play, from strokeplay and matchplay to the bizarrely named Bing Bang Bong (no, you won't need a condom). The ball movement's good; the courses – all 11 of them, and all designed by Jack – are convincingly three-dimensional; and you can play on-line. (While on-line, you can also post up one of your designed courses, and other people can download them.) And there are loads of really nice touches, such as the yardage appearing automatically on the overhead hole view when you aim. Overall, *Jack Nicklaus 5* is a great upgrade and well worth buying.

PCZ VERDICT Realism 8 • Graphics 8 • Courses 10 **OVERALL 92%**

THE GOLF PRO

★ £44.99 • Empire Interactive • Reviewed: PCZ #62

The Golf Pro's swing control system is brilliant: you hold the mouse button down and move your mouse from side to side to represent the natural golf swing. It's the first game to do a decent job of this (Cendant's effort came out first, but its control method was let down by substandard animation and, well, by being a bit crap).

The handicap system means that you can't play at professional difficulty level until you earn it (you start as a beginner or amateur and move up as you improve), but once you hit pro level you may regret it – all the on-screen swing aids disappear. Judging a shot entirely by the player's movement is bloody difficult. Even with visual aids, doing everything by feel means it takes practice to become proficient, and it can be frustrating. But there are good practice facilities and tutorials.

Presentation throughout is immaculate, the only minor flaw being that the pre-rendered courses mean you can be aiming the ball without looking from behind the player, which is occasionally unhelpful with close-range shots. There are two good courses – one, St Mellion, designed by Jack Nicklaus, doesn't appear in his own game. Overall though, *The Golf Pro* is excellent and well worth buying – if you're prepared to practice.

PCZ VERDICT Realism 9 • Graphics 9 • Courses 8 **OVERALL 90%**



Once you get to pro level, all the on-screen swing aids disappear!

BRITISH OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF

★ £39.99 • Eidos • Reviewed: PCZ #56

When I first reviewed this I said it was a viable alternative to *Links* or *PGA*, and this is still the case to a large extent, except that two more alternatives have now leapfrogged it. It's still alright, though. You get to play Royal Troon and St Andrews, and although the graphics are a bit flat, there are 3D course objects and it all looks very nice in the rain and mist. There are selectable picture-in-picture views, and the controls are intuitive and include a nice variation on putting. Oh, and there's also the world's most boring caddie, ostensibly there to offer advice about the course, but who witters on about the history of golf so much you'll feel like bludgeoning his brains out with a putter.

PCZVERDICT Realism 7 • Graphics 7 • Courses 7 **OVERALL 80%**



Whatever you do, keep clear of the caddie.



Occasionally, Janet liked to scare the neighbours by holding a club above the wall with a scary face painted on it.



Never, ever play shots off the carpet when your mum's just cleaned it.

MICROSOFT GOLF 98

★ £44.99 • Microsoft

Microsoft Golf always used to look like a roopy version of the previous year's *Links* – because it was. As *Links* moved on to a new version, with new improvements and features, so *Microsoft Golf* came out in the old version, with less views and a dodgy Microsoft control system. Nobody ever actually bought it, but it often turned up bundled with PCs.

This year, however, it doesn't look anything like last year's *Links*. It even looks pretty good – good enough to earn a cry of "Ooh, that looks really real" from a passing ignoramus. It's slightly disconcerting, actually – the backgrounds have a weird flat lighting effect. It's like playing golf in a world created by aliens to look like the real thing, in one of those elaborate experiments where they test a human's reactions to... (Alright, alright, get on with it – Ed). Or something.

The animation of the golfer is odd, too. Sometimes it's really, violently fast; it's like he's suddenly heard he's been sacked and you've been given his job at twice the pay – a sort of enraged flail. It doesn't affect the outcome of the shot, it's just disturbing. The general feeling of unease is added to by the world's tetchiest caddie, standing behind you having a go every time you do anything wrong. Even his advice sounds bad-tempered. The fact that they've picked someone with a Northern Irish voice may be significant. Then again it may not. I have no way of knowing.

There are four decent courses, hole fly-bys, and four (count 'em) ways to swing – *Links*-style two-click; traditional three-click; 'natural' swing – moving the mouse towards and away from you; and then there's the Sim Swing, which seems to be for those of us with the hand-eye co-ordination of David James. All you do is select all the options and press a button and the computer swings for you. You complete and utter wuss.

Like the other main contenders, you can go on-line to play other people – in this case, to the Internet Gaming Zone. The manual boasts that it also provides 'matchmaking' for playing against people with similar skills. We won't go into that. Anyway, this year they've finally got an okay game. No one will buy it, but at least there won't be weeping when you find it bundled with your next PC.

PCZVERDICT Realism 8 • Graphics 8 • Courses 8 **OVERALL 82%**

Great game, but if you already own *Links LS*, you might want to look elsewhere.Race your mates round the course, thanks to *Links LS 98's* ability to load in all the holes in one go.

LINKS LS 98

★ £44.99 • Eidos Interactive

Links is the only golf game in existence that loads an entire course at once, instead of a series of single holes. This means you can have fun racing a mate from, say, the first tee to the sixth green and back to the first hole. Or whatever crazy things you youngsters do these days. And I love it very much. It looks amazing, it feels just right, you can customise everything in the game... it's absolutely brilliant.

This year's version has done a few things to try to make you buy it even if you have last year's – some visual enhancements, some extra camera angles, the chance to design your own multi-player tournaments off-line (as well as play them on-line), and suchlike. Plus, as ever, you can convert old *Links* add-on courses. But I don't know that it's enough. Don't get me wrong – *Links LS 98* is a very, very good game indeed, and I'll still play it. But I don't have to pay for it. If you do, and you already have *Links LS*, make sure you try before you buy.

PCZ VERDICT Realism 10 • Graphics 9 • Courses 9

OVERALL 93%

“Real golf requires that you wear clothing that makes you look like Ronnie Corbett; computer golf lets you wear what the hell you like”



SCHWING...

Golf swings in games used to be crap. Inevitably, things have got much better



Not so long ago, the depiction of a golf swing in a game was a simple affair: a straight power bar with a couple of lines on it. You clicked a button once to start proceedings, once again to decide how much power you wanted to apply, and a third time to decide whether you'd hit

the ball straight, or draw or fade it (or hook or slice it if you missed it badly). *Links* introduced the two-click swing, where you hold down the mouse button, release it to set the power, then click to direct the shot. In doing so, *Links* also introduced a circular power bar which curved, three-dimensionally, around the player. Suddenly, the following year, everyone's power bars looked like this. Such is the fate of innovators everywhere.

Eventually, there came the virtual(ish) swing, where the movement of the mouse across the mat corresponds to the power applied to the shot. The first to try it was Cendant's *Front Page Sports Golf* – and it didn't work too well, which is probably why they gave you the option to have a click-swing method as well.

But *The Golf Pro's* version does work, and very well. And sure enough, this year just about every game out there has a version of it, each of which works to a greater or lesser extent. Most of them have gone about it half-heartedly – the swing's performed, then the golfer moves into action. *The Golf Pro* and *Actua Golf 2* are the only ones that animate the golfer as you swing. With *Actua* it's an option, and given that the swing in the game looks like someone's having an epileptic fit anyway, you probably wouldn't care either way.

But to our minds, this smacks too much of expending energy. If we wanted to exercise, we'd take up real golf. Still, it's done now – our lives moved unnecessarily onwards, just like when they changed the name of Opal Fruits to Chimps' Arse Sheddings (or whatever they're called now – I always black out in denial when the advert comes on). We may not like it, but we'll all just have to live with it.





ODDS AND SODS

A few, relatively under-par golf games get shoved through the ball washer.

ACTUA GOLF 2 £39.99 • Gremlin Interactive



Actua Golf 2 is, as the insightful among you will glean from the title, Gremlin's second attempt at making a golf game using the motion-capturing skills that brought you... well, all the other sports games they make. It comes with plenty of courses to hack your way around – eight in all, including famous ones like Kiawah Island and Carnoustie. You can play against a mob of famous names, including Ernie Els, Colin Montgomerie and other large, fat people. Sadly, none of them look much like their namesakes – and they certainly don't

appear to swing like them. In fact, one of the big problems with the game is the look of the swing. I'm sure it's been motion-captured from people who are really good at golf, but something about the way it comes out makes it look like they got their club caught in a power socket mid-swing.

PCZVERDICT Realism 4 • Graphics 5 • Courses 6

OVERALL 65%

VIRTUAL GOLF - THE SCOTTISH OPEN £39.99 • Core Design/Eidos



This is remarkable for many reasons. Its strange, post-nuclear landscapes leave you feeling depressed, all look the same no matter where they're located, and sound as if they're inflatable. Commentary is provided by a public school twerp with a voice so grating you'd glass the owner if you heard it in a public place. The ball movement has the ball hanging in the air for split seconds on a 250-yard drive. You can't save games mid-round and you can't even practice – never mind play – certain courses until you've attained pro status. Most peculiar of all, only one of the four courses included is actually in Scotland.

PCZVERDICT Realism 3 • Graphics 3 • Courses 4

OVERALL 40%

DAVID LEADBETTER'S GOLF £19.99 • MicroProse



David Leadbetter is a golf coach who never achieved anything as a player, and as such no-one's going to buy this in the way they might buy a game with Arnie or Jack stuck on the front. So they need a gimmick, and the gimmick is that playing this will supposedly help your game out on the course – which is about as likely as *FIFA Soccer* making you a better footballer. It dates from the uninterpreted icon era, which means you spend half your time trying to work out what the bastards mean, and it pioneered the post-nuclear landscape effect so beloved of *The Scottish Open* – except

when you get to the greens, which resemble the walls of a disco from *Starsky And Hutch*. It never looked that great anyway; and nowadays it's about as up to date as a *Two Ronnies* sketch.

PCZVERDICT Realism 4 • Graphics 2 • Courses 2

OVERALL 45%

PICTURE PERFECT GOLF £19.99 • Empire Interactive



Picture Perfect Golf was the first golf game not to feature a picture of a little man in badly co-ordinated sportswear playing your shots. Instead, all you got was a static photograph of the hole ahead of you. But the photographs aren't even good – all you get is one course, a very narrow aiming range (if you hit the ball somewhere they haven't photographed, it's a lost ball) and ball movement that's laughably two-dimensional. The sound effects also deserve a mention: the wind noises are like an asthmatic water buffalo after running up the steps of the Telecom tower. Other than that, it's outstanding.

PCZVERDICT Realism 2 • Graphics 3 • Courses 1

OVERALL 10%

SENSIBLE GOLF £9.99 • VIE/Sold Out



It's hard to believe they actually brought this out. In fact, I think they tried to pretend they hadn't. Review copies never made the rounds, and it's only now that you can buy it, on – ironically – the Sold Out label. 'Ironically' because no one in their right mind would buy it. The idea of taking a *Sensible Soccer* approach and putting little pixelated players onto a golf course may have seemed a good idea late one night in the pub, but like all late-night ideas in the pub, it was shite in the cold light of day. The graphics would look slightly simplistic and outdated on a Game Boy. Not exactly cutting-edge.

PCZVERDICT Realism 0 • Graphics 0 • Courses 1

OVERALL 3%



That looks a bit scary, doesn't it?

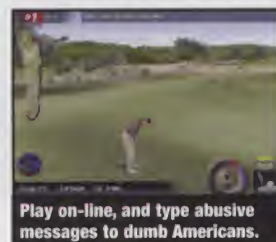
FRONT PAGE SPORTS GOLF

★ £39.99 • Cendant

FPS Golf pioneered the mouse-swing system, but it doesn't really work that well owing to mouse configuration problems. Fortunately, it offers an alternative, in the form of the good old three-click system. However, while the ball movement is vaguely 3D-looking, the course graphics are less so, and the two don't sit that comfortably together.

It's not bad though, with a wide range of game types, decent enough courses and, best of all, a fantastic clashing tartan trouser/checkered sweater clothing option – the first game that lets you dress like as much of a prick as you can in the real thing.

PCZVERDICT Realism 6 • Graphics 6 • Courses 7 **OVERALL 70%**



Play on-line, and type abusive messages to dumb Americans.



Why not line up 150 yards from a chum and duke it out?

PGA TOUR PRO

★ £44.99 • Electronic Arts • Reviewed: PCZ #55

This version of *PGA* sees the welcome arrival of a major overhaul. The graphics are altogether more three-dimensional, the ball movement is superb, and there are a number of new additions, including TV-style multiple camera views of your shots. A gimmicky risk meter calculates the supposed danger factor of any shot, and you can do a Faldo and walk the course in real time, checking out angles and pissing off everyone else no end.

The Internet play facility is brilliant, enabling up to 80 players to compete at once. It's very easy to set up, and you can chat (literally, if you have a microphone) while you play. A fantastic game, and the best golf sim on the PC at the moment.

PCZVERDICT Realism 9 • Graphics 9 • Courses 8 **OVERALL 94%**

WELCOME TO THE LAND

WIREFPLAY » QUAKE II

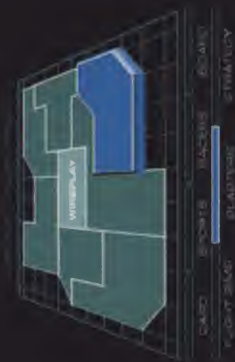
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Wireplay
The game network from BT



Wireplay

The games network from BT

NEWSWIRE

This month's hottest information from Wireplay, the UK's number one on-line gaming network

UH-OH, HERE THEY COME

★ The first all-female *Quake II* clan has arrived on Wireplay. The Man Eaters, founded by the scary-sounding Elvira and the frankly quite terrifying-sounding Dumptruck, will only accept female members. "You don't have to be brilliant at *Quake II*," they say. "We will soon train you up in the wonderful ways there are to kill men." Their goal in life? "To make the males pay for their sins." Blimey.

You can find more details on the Man Eaters on their website which you can find at www.btinternet.com/~dawn.swift/ME/ME-Clan.htm.



① The Man Eaters: watch out boys, they'll chew you up.



PLAYER OF THE MONTH

QUAKE II, MAY 13

So, you think you're a bit tasty at *Quake II*. Meet Mrs Paddock and think again. *Richie Shoemaker* reports

② The Night Lords posse came, had a go and, yes, they were 'ard enough. This time...

③ One of these scary Night Lords people is Mrs Paddock. We'd guess that this isn't her (or his?) real name.



★ The blood flowed freely when Mallo, Paul Presley, *PC Zone* art-bod Tim McDonald and myself joined some regulars to kick a few frags on the *PC Zone Quake II* Wireplay server. The game variation played, called *Lithium 2*, differs from the regular deathmatch as it includes grappling hooks and coloured power-ups called runes.

Yours truly managed to uphold the honour of the team by peaking in a respectable fourth place. Star of the show, however, was undoubtedly Mrs Paddock, who is our Player of the Month (if only because we're not nepotistic enough to consider our own Jeremy for his *Actua Soccer 2* performance). Mrs Paddock is part of the *Night Lords* clan who will quite happily accept challenges from all-comers. For more details, make sure you visit their site at www.btinternet.com/~mcaspu/NL/.

X-Cell (who is currently clan-less) also did very well, finishing in second place, and was gracious enough to drop us a line: "You didn't play too bad, although other people on your team didn't do so well." Actually, we were just warming up. Or something.

WIREPLAY HITS 50,000

The chaps behind Wireplay were celebrating an important milestone in May – the signing of their 50,000th registered member. The service, which is currently growing by more than 2,000 gamers per week, has seen a six-fold growth in its subscribers since the introduction of the Windows 95-based software in October 1997

Wireplay's easy-to-use interface acts as a gateway to over 70 multi-player games.



START RIGHT HERE!

Wireplay, the games network from BT, enables you to meet up and compete in a variety of games using the standard telephone network and a dedicated server, which provides a more consistent and faster gateway than the Internet. You need a 75MHz Pentium (or better), with at least 16Mb RAM, a modem (28.8K recommended), the Wireplay client software and copies of the games you wish to play (although several shareware versions and demos are supported).

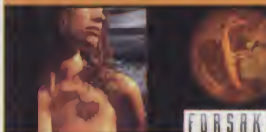
If you have the CD-ROM edition of *PC Zone*, you'll find the latest version of the Wireplay client on your cover disc, along with some other goodies. Call freephone 0800 800918 and you'll be sent a free CD-ROM with all the Wireplay-related software currently available, including special editions of *Air Attack*, *EF2000* and *Big Red Racing*, a Mind Games Compendium and various software. You'll also find this software in the download section on Wireplay's website (www.wireplay.com/uk/downloads/).

There are two ways of paying for your time on Wireplay – selectable when you install and run the client software. The Pay-As-You-Play option costs 2.5p a minute off-peak (that's Mon-Fri 6pm-8am and all times at weekends) and 6p a minute at all other times (minimum charge is 5p). Alternatively, frequent users can subscribe to the service with a credit card (Visa or Mastercard) for £9.95 a month or £99.50 a year. On-line costs are then charged at local rates at all times. Use BT's discount schemes and call charges can be reduced to as little as 1p per minute.

WIREPLAY GAMES

Acclaim's smash-hit *Forsaken* (reviewed May '98 and awarded a whopping 94%) is the latest game to be added to the Wireplay roster, making over 70 in total – all playable on-line via Wireplay's single, easy-to-use interface. Here's the latest list, but keep in mind that new titles are being added all the time.

- ★ Actua Soccer: Club Edition
- ★ Actua Soccer 2
- ★ Age Of Empires
- ★ Air Attack
- ★ Armored Fist 2
- ★ Big Red Racing
- ★ Blood
- ★ CART Precision Racing
- ★ Command & Conquer
- ★ Daytona Deluxe (inc demo)
- ★ Descent 2 (inc shareware)
- ★ Doom (v1.9, inc shareware)
- ★ Doom II
- ★ Duke Nukem 3D
- ★ EF2000: Wireplay Edition
- ★ Euro 96
- ★ Extreme Assault
- ★ F22 ADF
- ★ Formula Karts
- ★ Forsaken (below)



- ★ Fragile Allegiance
- ★ G-nome
- ★ Incubation
- ★ Jedi Knight
- ★ Jedi Knight: MOTS
- ★ Microsoft Flight Sim 98
- ★ Mind & card games
- ★ MUD II
- ★ NASCAR Racing 2
- ★ Netmeh (MechWarrior 2)
- ★ Plane Crazy
- ★ Quake I / II
- ★ Red Alert (inc Counterstrike/The Aftermath)
- ★ Redneck Rampage
- ★ Shadow Warrior (inc shareware)
- ★ Sid Meier's Gettysburg
- ★ Terminal Velocity
- ★ Total Annihilation
- ★ Ultimate Doom
- ★ Virtua Fighter 2 (inc demo)
- ★ Virtual Pool
- ★ Virtual Snooker
- ★ WarCraft II (inc demo)



Ⓢ 1-1 during extra-time. It couldn't have got more exciting if Elvis had appeared on the pitch.



Ⓢ It's 5-4 to Jeremy on penalties and Campbell has to score to stay in it. But doesn't.



Wireplay
The games network from BT

ZONE ON WIREPLAY

ACTUA SOCCER 2, MAY 6

What happened when *PC Zone* took on other magazines in a virtual footie tournament? With a lot at stake – namely a ticket to the World Cup – the heat was on. Warren Christmas reports

Some of the country's finest games-playing journalists gathered – virtually, of course – to compete in an *Actua Soccer 2* tournament via Wireplay.

Journos from magazines other than *PC Zone* also took part, presumably just to make up the numbers (32 in total). And the prize? Oh, nothing much – just two tickets and an all-expenses paid trip to a World Cup game of the winner's choosing. No, really.

You'd have thought we'd have been practising for weeks, right? Wrong. We're busy people. We have a magazine to produce. A shiny, new-look magazine at that (you may have noticed). 'Training' consisted of a 10-minute kickabout, a few tabs and a crate-full of beer. Gazza would have been proud of us.

Steve Hill kicked off the group stages of the tournament with a 1-1 draw ("I scored too early... and just f**ked it"). Richie Shoemaker followed, cruising to a comfortable 2-0 win, while Jeremy came from behind to grab a 2-2 draw. Your correspondent's first opponent – a Scottish chap called Stuart Campbell

representing men's magazine *Esquire* – immediately endeared himself to the watching audience by calling yours truly a "poof". How very mature. Unfortunately, he also beat me 2-0... but then I had been playing *World Cup 98* for six hours that day (relearning *Actua's* controls was a nightmare). Still, revenge (of sorts) was to come.

The second round of games saw Jeremy and Richie both record wins. Steve gained a 1-1 draw, having walked the ball into the net with five minutes to play, while I managed a walkover 2-0 win as my opponent was lost in cyberspace. Problem was, with the other two in my group receiving the same, I was already effectively out of the tournament already. I wasn't happy.

Richie took an early lead in his final group game, but the match was abandoned at half-time when the game bombed out. He agreed to continue the game later in the tournament... or so he thought. Jeremy won his final game to see him into the next round, I picked up a consolation draw, while Steve – who needed a win to go through – crashed-out 1-0. "I

might as well f**k off home," he said, "F**k the World Cup." Steve – *PC Zone's* football 'expert' – wasn't happy.

Richie was 1-0 down at half-time in his replayed match. But now the tournament referee had decided that the *whole* of the match should be replayed. Another goal against in the second half and Richie was out of the tournament. "The referee's a wanker," he said. "F**k the lot of 'em". Richie – so close to France, and yet so far – wasn't happy.

Jeremy, on a bit of a roll, cruised through his quarter-final 2-1 and it was onto the semi – a tense affair against some guy called Jim, the editor of a rival PC games mag (yes, there are others). Jeremy, who only seconds earlier had muttered the words "free kicks are crap in this game", scored an early goal from – yep – a free kick, only to see Jim equalise in the second-half. Final score: 1-1. Was it all over for the lad?

Was it hell. After 28 tense minutes of extra time, Jeremy was awarded a corner. Bergkamp smashed it home and the boy Wells was in the final... against that man Stuart Campbell. With 23 minutes gone, the German goalkeeper fumbles, leaving



Ⓢ Can he do it? The pressure is on and the stress is starting to show.
Ⓢ Jeremy scores the winning goal and no-one's more surprised than us!



Jezza to slot in the opener... but Campbell equalises on 43 minutes with an unstoppable shot from 35 yards.

No more goals in open play, so it was onto penalties. Jezza was up first. Yes! 1-0. Campbell equalises to make it 1-1. Booo! And then... 2-1... 2-2... 3-2... 3-3... 4-3... 4-4... 5-4... this one to stay in... NO! Stuart Campbell and his German chums blow it. "I can't feel my legs," says Campbell on the phone moments later. "Really?" says Jezza. "We're going to the pub to celebrate." And we did. Jeremy – who, for the record, is now going to see England's opening game against Tunisia in Marseilles – was, and still is, very, very happy. [E]

C'MON THEN – TAKE US ON!

Think you can beat us at *Actua Soccer 2*? Well you can try... as soon as the World Cup has finished. Watch out for details on the *Actua Soccer 2: PC Zone v The Rest Of The World* tournament in next month's issue, out Thursday 9th July.

In the meantime, keep an eye on the multi-player section of the chat forum on our new-look website (www.pczone.co.uk) for *PC Zone's* appearance dates on Wireplay throughout June and July. Remember, we're always open to challenges and game suggestions from you lot. Incidentally, you'll find us on-line and kicking on Wireplay most Wednesday evenings – just look for players with a PCZ prefix to their names.

FEEDBACK



PC Zone drives a bulldozer through the Ivory tower housing our heralded games reviewers by asking you, the punter, what you think of the games we've reviewed

★ ANSWERED BY Adam Phillips

IT'S YOUR SHOUT

Feedback is a regular column dedicated to gleaming your views on the games we reviewed in the last couple of issues. If you want to agree with us, that's fine; if you want to vent your rage on one of our reviews, hell, that's fine, too – we just want your opinions. Remember to keep your comments to between 50-150 words and include your name, address and age.

WRITE TO Feedback, *PC Zone* Magazine, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

E-MAIL Alternatively, e-mail them to us at letters.pczone.co.uk with 'Feedback' in the subject line.

STARCRRAFT

REVIEWED Issue 64, June
SCORE 88% (*PC Zone* Recommended)

What we thought

A quote from our review: "RTS veterans won't find anything here to get wildly excited about. But having said that, while *StarCraft* won't win any awards whatsoever for originality, it's a highly playable, visually impressive example of the genre... Think of *StarCraft* as Blizzard's generic mission disk for all your favourite RTS games and you won't be far from the truth."

What you think

★ "StarCraft is a damn excellent game, with a commendable storyline attached to it like *WarCraft 2*. What many people don't realise in the UK is that while *WarCraft 2* was a pretty good single-player game, it also had a larger multi-player following than any other game. I think *StarCraft* will become like

WarCraft 2 – a much better multi-player game than single-player. It's just a question of whether you're on-line and have access to the hundreds of campaigns which I am sure will be created by on-line players."

Graham, 31

★ "It seemed to me to have been designed from the ground up as science fiction – unlike, for example, *Total Annihilation*, which may well have been based on World War II weapons. I mean, yeah, they're robots, but that might have just been a design

"Supremacy... is like trying to play *Space Invaders* on an old punch-card machine with an Ewok sitting on your face"

MARK

decision because of the difficulties of rendering 'realistic'-looking weapons with that particular engine. Don't get me wrong, I love *TA*, but it doesn't have the atmosphere of *StarCraft*."

Jesse Rosenblum, 25

★ "I read your comments about *StarCraft* – in particular about the soldiers being 'thick' and not being

able to squeeze through a narrow passageway. To be honest, while the overall game is a good un, the fact that there's still a TFSS (Thick As F**k Soldier Syndrome) problem is pretty piss poor. I think

Blizzard's AI guy needs a sharp kick up his narrow passageway to wake him up. Christ, I've been reading *PC Zone* too long!"

Jill Henderson, 24

★ "What's going on?! I coughed up the readies for the game, booted it up, and then sat there wondering what Blizzard have been doing for the last God only knows how

long! This is a very good game, for sure, but after all the hype and delays it's still a major letdown, with nothing to really set it apart from all the other RTS games clogging up the shelves."

Richard Glendening, 26

★ "It's nothing new but I still love this game. RTS games are like an addiction – you can never get enough of them. Hurry up, *C&C II*! And *TA II*!"

Geoff Marks, 18

★ "Why are people bitching about the lack of ultra-hi-res mode? If it was anything like the *Age Of Empires* hi-res mode, you wouldn't be able to see what's going on unless you had a 21-inch monitor. And a two-inch co... [snip]."

James Kennedy, 31

STARSHIP TITANIC

REVIEWED Issue 63, May
SCORE 91% (*PC Zone Classic*)

What we thought

A quote from our review: "[The much-heralded speech interface] takes a little getting used to, but you soon get the swing of things, and the sense of freedom this affords you is immeasurable... *Starship Titanic* is a piece of software that not only shatters several long-held illusions about what's possible in this genre, but innovates and is filled with everything that's right about adventure gaming."

What you think

★ "After solving the first problem, everything happened so fast – solving one problem after another

M1 Tank Platoon: you know a sim has made a big splash when the people who operate the vehicles being simulated give it a thumbs-up.



StarCraft's solid sci-fi setting has gone down well with readers, but its sometimes thick-as-pig-shit AI hasn't.



Jane's F-15 has gone down a storm with the hard-core flight sim community.



Several whinges – typified here by one player – about the rock-hard difficulty of playing Forsaken on anything other than Easy setting.



and then... the end. The worst – but only – thing that annoyed me was spending the cash for only eight hours of gameplay. And I have a feeling I'm not the only one who feels this way."

Ugly Bob

★ "The test parser is one area that I was hoping would advance the boundaries of what's presently considered to be state of the art... It works, but it is not an 'artificial intelligence' of any higher order. The only alternative is to give us a list of canned questions."

Stuart Southerland, 37

JANE'S F-15

REVIEWED Issue 64, June
SCORE 92% (PC Zone Classic)

What we thought

A quote from our review: "The level of detail is *F-15*'s only potential shortfall, really, and the game might not appeal to those of you who just fancy some flying rounded off by a bit of light bombing of an enemy village. But if you like something a bit more heavyweight... *F-15* is the best there is."

What you think

★ "Raises the genre to new heights of realism – the best portrayal of avionics since *Fleet Defender*. Forget *Falcon 4.0*, this is propeller-head heaven. The in-cockpit user interface provides a deep level of immersion, while the mission builder provides long-term playability."

Ian, 28

★ "I haven't played *F-15* much and I doubt I will,

unless a patch appears that significantly improves the hardware acceleration support. Also, while the graphics aren't awful, they don't do justice to a Voodoo2 (or Voodoo1, for that matter) card when compared to its competitors."

Harold Amis

★ "This sim is great stuff... I can spend hours just learning the intricacies of one system, weapon or tactic, and enjoy it the whole time. This is a rich piece of software. The whole-hearted emphasis on realism is greatly appreciated here."

Scott Silvey

STAR WARS SUPREMACY

REVIEWED Issue 64, June
SCORE 68%

What we thought

A quote from our review: "*Star Wars Supremacy* is a polished DirectX-based Windows 95 game with neat graphics, competent sound effects (including voice messages), some utterly predictable gameplay and a creaking interface. Plus *Supremacy*'s

“Showed *M1TP2* to a bunch of M1 Master Gunners today... it was all they could do to keep from tripping over each other to play”

CHRISTOPHER CARNES

'multi-player' options are poor, and only two people can ever play at once. Maybe next time."

What you think

★ "At its core, *Supremacy* is an embarrassingly simple strategy game hidden behind

a bewilderingly complex interface and tarted up with some *Star Wars* references. It's like trying to play *Space Invaders* on an old punch-card machine with an Ewok sitting on your face (and believe me, I've tried).

"*Master Of Orion II* set the standard by which future space-based strategy games would be judged. *Supremacy* takes a step backwards – crap graphics, crap sound, non-existent gameplay and a 'real-time starship battle simulator' that would have ZX Spectrums laughing their little squishy-keyed arses off.

"Please play *Master Of Orion II* or *Imperium Galactica* instead. I know they're not *Star Wars*, but stick a couple of baps on your head and breathe deeply for their duration and you'll have a lot more fun."

Mark

FORSAKEN

REVIEWED Issue 63, May
SCORE 94% (PC Zone Classic)

What we thought

A quote from our review: "Relentless sinister robots

block every turn. They will not deviate, and take a lot of killing. Many follow a set path, but the airborne ones flock around a predetermined leader, with a new one immediately appointed upon its demise.

Some even hide behind pillars and attempt to lure you out so they can kill you in the face. Bastards. Such is the realism, enemies are sometimes hard to pick out against the background; but no-one said it was going to be easy."

What you think

★ "Is it just me, or is this game impossible on the normal difficulty level? It was tough but do-able on the first two levels, but on the nuclear level (three) I had to start a new game on Easy. I think a little difficulty balancing is needed. The jump in difficulty between Easy and Normal is ludicrous. I shudder to even think of playing on either of the two harder levels of difficulty, and I consider myself to be a moderately advanced game player. Other than the difficulty level causing me to pull out my hair in frustration, this is an awesome game."

Jerel Mackay, 28

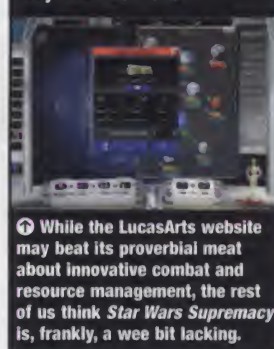
M1 TANK PLATOON II

REVIEWED Issue 63, May
SCORE 90% (PC Zone Classic)

What we thought

A quote from our review: "*M1TP2* is quite unlike any other war sim on the market. The attention to detail is quite astounding, and the fact that it looks so good is an absolute bonus. Be warned, though: it's pretty heavyweight, so if you want an alternative to *Armoured Fist 2* you'd better look elsewhere. This

① *Titanic*: we loved it, but some of you have found Douglas Adams' new game a tad on the easy side. Show-offs.



② While the LucasArts website may beat its proverbial meat about innovative combat and resource management, the rest of us think *Star Wars Supremacy* is, frankly, a wee bit lacking.

is serious stuff, make no mistake about it."

What you think

★ "Showed *M1TP2* to a bunch of M1 Master Gunners today... it was all they could do to keep from tripping over each other to play. After putting the sim through its paces on many missions, the overwhelming reaction was 'Wow!' 'I'm getting this right away!' 'This is awesome!' etc."

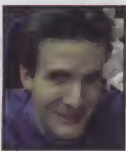
Christopher Carnes, 33

★ "Remember all those lost evenings in the early 1990s spent playing the best armour simulation ever to grace a home computer? Well, the good news is that the long-awaited sequel is everything the original was, only this time in 3Dfx splendour. Lots of depth to it, if only I had the time..."

"Negatives: usual signature hallmarks of a rushed release – namely bugs and missing features. Despite that, it still manages to remain highly enjoyable."

Ian, 28

EXTENDED PLAY



Get more out of the games you already own.
We've stuffed our cover CD with all the latest patches and bug fixes so it won't cost you a penny

★ WORDS Phil Wand • CARTOON Charlie Booker

TRY IT YOURSELF



On this month's cover CD we've got all the official patches, bug fixes, utilities and map editors we could find, including all those mentioned in these pages. To track them down, use the CD browser to go to the 'Patches' section. All the patches are listed with a brief description and any relevant documentation. Make sure you read any associated README files for information on how to install individual patches. For further help, turn to our CD pages, starting on page 144.

We're always chasing upgrades, aren't we? Take the CPU as an example. Even though many games will chug along fine on a Pentium 133, we're all desperate to crack open our piggy banks and dash off to PC World when the latest bit of kit comes out. "Pentium II 400MHz, sir? That'll be no obvious improvement and a month's mortgage payment, please." And what about video cards? As soon as you've gone and blown £100 on a Voodoo card, the manufacturers release the next version up – for £200.

Generally speaking, it's hugely expensive to stay perched on the 'bleeding edge' of technology – unless you're talking about games, that is. Developers are always releasing important fixes and patches, and they're almost universally free. Many of these upgrades squash pesky bugs, improve speed and introduce whole new features, all of which can help transform the game.

Every month, I'll be looking at the latest and greatest patches and bug fixes to hit the Internet and we'll include many of these on *PC Zone's* cover-mounted CD-ROM.

In future, to get the most out of your existing games, Extended Play is the place to turn.

FIND YOUR OWN PATCHES

New patches and bug fixes go up on the Internet every day. To keep abreast of the latest, make sure you check out these sites

<http://gamesdomain.telepac.pt/patches/>
www.inf.tu-dresden.de/~mr2/pc/index.html
www.terravirtua.com/gaming/pc/gaming_pc_downloads_patches.html
www.avault.com/pcrl/patches_d_list.asp
www2.sega.com/support/pc_techsupport/patches.html
www.gamezone.com/gamesell/patches.htm
www.winfiles.com/

“Generally speaking, it's hugely expensive to stay perched on the 'bleeding edge' of technology – unless you're talking about games, that is”



“You sure is one purdy veehickul... Squeal for me truckie... squeeeeee!”

MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS

★ Improved multi-player use, new tracks and a track editor bring *MTM* up to date



Until recently, if you got a big kick out of colossal tyres, V8 engines and vast oceans of mud, you could only be a baccy-chewin' yokel with a keg of moonshine under one arm and a squealing pig under the other. But with modern technology and a copy of Microsoft's *Monster Truck Madness*, even your mother could get hooked. Progress, eh?

Despite the fact that monster truck races are on the whole about as entertaining as a blocked drain (as is any other American 'sport', for that matter), the game is surprisingly enjoyable. Digging those great big studded tyres into the mud, careering into your opponents and watching the dirt fly is really quite addictive. Thus *MTM* has a loyal following of fans on the Internet, and downloads of new tracks, trucks and upgrades are fairly easy to come by.

★ MULTI-PLAYER SESSIONS

This was one of the problems with the original release version of the game, because they tended to be a bit on the sluggish side. Microsoft soon made a patch (*mtmpatch.exe*) available for download, which instantly cured the difficulties. Double-click on the executable and you're away – just remember that all players need to have this upgrade installed before they can join in.

★ **DIY TRACKS** The latest version of *Monster Truck Madness* Track Editor (*tracked.exe*) enables you to create your own tracks. If you have the full retail version of the game, you can use this editor to modify existing tracks and trucks or to create a suite of your own from scratch. Several websites have listings of files that other *MTM* owners have created, all available for free download.

★ OFFICIAL ADD-ON TRACKS

From Microsoft comes *Crazier Eight* (*crazy8.exe*), *Sierra*

(*sierra.exe*) and *Snowy Circuit* (*snowy.exe*) which are all official add-on tracks, and thus a proverbial must-have for any *MTM* owner. Plus game developers Terminal Reality have released their *Patriot* (*patriot.zip*) truck, as used by the programming team for testing, together with *King of the Hill* (*kinghill.zip*). The latter is one of the team's top tracks, featuring a mountainous corkscrew course with endless possibilities for colliding with your chums.

★ **COOL TUNES** Lastly, recently released WAV files from *Monster Truck Madness 2* range from the prophetic “That boy ain't right!” (*aintright.wav*) to the satirical “Oh, the humanity!” (*humanity.wav*). If you fancy making your PC sound like a slack-jawed hick with the IQ of a salad bar, bang this little lot onto your hard drive and head for the sound control panel.

CIVILISATION II

★ Play *Civ II* in multi-player mode – the new option is here at last!



A thoroughly engaging and enjoyable game, *Civilisation II* nevertheless came under fire for one thing: no multi-player options. And although a new beefed-up version went into development at MicroProse's North Carolina studios, strategists all over the planet were left with frowns on their faces. But hang on a moment – what's this file (*MPC2Inst.exe*)? Pickle my plums if it ain't a natty little utility called *MultiPlayerCiv2* that makes it possible to play *Civ II* head to head against your friends over TCP/IP, IPX/SPX, modem-to-modem and even a null serial cable. Spoooge!

The installation is a breeze – just make sure you're running version 2.42 (*civ242.zip*) of the main game. *MPCiv2* won't alter anything, so you don't need to worry about it all going hideously wrong and demolishing your data files. A detailed manual outlining

“**Total Annihilation** makes everything else in the real-time strategy genre look desperately old and crap”

exactly how to fly the utility is provided on the author's website at www.citeweb.net/gjay/mpciv2.html, and there are a few important points you should make a note of. For example, if the game intro is not terminated by MPCiv2, make sure you close it manually. Never go delving around in the option menus, and remember to disable 'Always wait at end of turn' or you'll get stuck in a loop. Lastly, don't use the in-game tutorial or the foreign advisor menu.

X-COM: APOCALYPSE

★ Create your own levels in preparation for the new X-COM sequel



With more variety, depth and involvement than previous incarnations, the third X-COM outing was sure to be a hit. It also sported a brand new, real-time combat section, making it a viable proposition for all those people who used to fall asleep and bang their nose on the keyboard during the old turn-based games. Just as with *Monster Truck Madness*, the X-COM series has come to the fore again thanks to an impending sequel. But if you feel you just can't wait until the summer for X-COM: *Interceptor* (see page 84), Mythos have released the utility they used to design the *Apocalypse* maps, giving you the chance to rework any of the old levels.

★ **NEW LEVELS** TACEDIT (*taced.zip*) is one of those little wonders that has the words 'unsupported' and 'unfinished' stamped in big letters all over the help file. Those of you who've been messing around with editors and map generators since *Wolfenstein* will know that these translate to 'unstable' and 'ingenious'. In other words, you'll need a great deal of patience, but the end results will be nothing short of revolutionary. This particular wondertool enables you to create new X-COM maps,

although developers Mythos suggest that, due to their complex nature, you should stick to mucking about with the out-of-the-box levels. If you plan on going to town with these files and changing their every aspect, do make sure you back them up before starting out.

The data section of TACEDIT is the area which has most influence on the way the game plays. In no time at all you can change an object's every characteristic, from its weight to how long it burns when you set fire to it. Mythos say it's possible to completely change the way X-COM works, and I'd be inclined to agree with them.

RED ALERT and WARCRAFT II

★ More patches, maps and editors than you can shake a stick at



Yet another bonus for real-time strategy fans, this month's cover disc carries a whole host of *WarCraft 2* patches, maps and editors, plus a C&C: *Red Alert* configuration file that enables you to mess with the core attributes of units and structures. In the case of *WarCraft*, you'll need to spend a little time delving through the collection of archives and readme.txt files, but that's half the fun, right? Right.

If you're a *Red Alert* fan, simply drop Rules.ini into the main directory. You can edit this file with any text editor, and it's very well-documented. My own version of it gives increased armour and capacity on all harvesters, stronger Allied defences, and Construction Yards which have the ability to fight back with a barrage of guided missiles. Not only does this extend the life of the game, it also just goes to prove that you don't necessarily need standalone utilities and clever patches to alter the way it plays – anyone for surface-to-air ore silos and exploding flame dogs? ☺



The *Total Annihilation* map editor feels as groomed as the game itself. Bolt-on maps and map features are available by the lorry load from www.totalannihilation.com.

TOTAL ANNIHILATION

★ Add multi-player computer opponents, new units and much more to this real-time strategy classic



With 'proper' alliances and teams, resource sharing, formidable computer opponents and a near faultless interface, *Total Annihilation* makes everything else in the real-time strategy genre look desperately old and crap. And in terms of support, add-ons and constant honing, few games come close. The latest versions boast automated resource sharing, new keyboard shortcuts, and an AI which gets better and better with each tweak. There are also 22 new units, with four more wrapped up in the 3.0 upgrade patch.

★ **TA VERSION 2.0B1** (*ta1x-2b1.exe*) is a major step forward in offering computer opponents in multi-player mode. When you're in the Battle Room, click on any vacant player badge to toggle between UNUSED, BLOCKED and AI. If you want to join up with a computer player, use the buttons in this column to form the alliance. This upgrade also adds a hugely useful new option that forces your mob to engage all enemy units and structures as soon as they come into range. Type +shootall in the game chat box to toggle this command on and off.

★ **TA VERSION 3.0** (*ta1x-30.exe*), released at the beginning of May, furnishes you with a total of 25 new units, and updates .DLL library files for improved online gaming. Plus you now have automatic sharing of map info and resources in multi-player games, and an ability to view queued construction orders simultaneously. A final warning about upgrading: the reliability of the version 3.0 patch is not 100 per cent. So, as with any upgrade, ensure you have a working backup before going ahead with any changes.

★ **NEW MAPS** Along with the upgrades, there are four new official Cavedog maps on our cover disc and, as you might expect, they're all extremely playable. Comet Crater (*cometctr.exe*) is a low-gravity lunar environment pitted with holes and cavities; Metal Isles (*metallsl.exe*) features four metal islands, and is unbeatable for head-to-head naval contests; Mounds of Mars (*mndsmars.exe*) is a medium-sized landscape map that makes for fun team play; Plains and Passes (*plnspass.exe*) is a small area of rugged land surrounded by large plains – again, it's great for multi-player.

★ **NEW UNITS** There's also a whole new army of CORE and ARM units ready and waiting to bolt on to your current copy of *TA*. All you need to know is that the base version of the game needs to be a minimum of 1.2 beta 1, which you can check by looking at the inscription below the logo on the opening screen. Every unit is worth installing, although from version 2, *TA* computer players are able to use them as well.

NEW UNITS

★ Just a few of *TA*'s new CORE and ARM units – and every single one is worth installing



ARM 'FLAKKER' ANTI-AIR FLAK GUN
Exceptional defence against Core bomber and fighter raids.



CORE 'TOASTER' POP-UP HEAVY CANNON
Spring up and make mincemeat of advancing troops.



ARM 'DEFENDER NS' NAVAL SERIES MISSILE TOWER
Bobbing-along version of Defender.



CORE 'DOMINATOR' HEAVY ROCKET
Big guns, lots of casualties. Great back-up for your vanguards.



ARM 'METAL MAKER NS' FLOATING METAL MAKER
Comes with complimentary box of sea sickness tablets.



ARM MOHO METAL MAKER
Another metal maker – one that pumps some serious iron.



ARM FORTIFICATION WALL
Dragon's teeth with added height and bullet-proof paint.



CORE 'VOYEUR' MOBILE RADAR KBOT
An ordinary radar tower that can walk off.



ARM 'EAGLE' RADAR PLANE
Radar aircraft. Useful for big maps and big battles.



CORE 'THUNDERBOLT' FLOATING HEAVY LASER TOWER
The floating stockade that says BOOM!



ARM CLOAKABLE FUSION PLANT
Serious amounts of energy – and seriously invisible.



ARM 'PENETRATOR' MOBILE ENERGY WEAPON
Trundle this into battle and watch the white flags fly.



CORE 'PHANTOM' RADAR-JAMMING SHIP
Alacazam! Makes your fleet disappear.



CORE 'LEVELLER' RIOT TANK
Run away while you still can! This baby's the all-in-one infantry killer.



ARM 'STINGRAY' NAVAL HEAVY LASER TOWER
Fzzzzt! You ain't getting down this stretch of water, mate.



THE LIONHEAD DIARIES



Find out what it's like to work as a games developer. We continue our fascinating insider's view of the making of *Black And White*, Lionhead's first game

★ WORDS Steve Jackson

PART 6: WE'RE ALL CONNECTED, YOU KNOW

For its first six months, Lionhead had been operating from an office in Peter Molyneux's house. With eight of us crammed into 150 square feet, there was a special quality to the working atmosphere – sort of 'intimate', you might say. But all this would soon have to come to an end. We desperately needed to expand.

We'd signed up an office on the nearby research park in Guildford – the place where Bullfrog had spent many years before moving to the Mana House. Our new offices were going to be unique, with specially designed curvy walls, ear-shaped portholes and miniature Space Invaders for door handles. The colour scheme would be... *Black And White*. Naturally!

There was no doubt we were all looking forward to having big desks and plenty of personal space, but we also knew that, in the future, we'd look back on our days at Molyneux Mansion with fond memories. Bearing this in mind, I decided one day to record for posterity the conversations flying round the Lionhead office. The following is an edited transcript of the conversations that afternoon.

CREDIT TO CLIVE

The phone rang. A producer from *The Money Programme* wanted to interview Peter. Apparently a recent survey had shown that 40 per cent of computer games had a British connection – they were either programmed in the UK, programmed under the direction of an expatriate Brit, or something like that. The producer wanted Peter's views on why Brits appeared to be so good at game development.

Peter attributed it to Sir Clive Sinclair, who produced the first mass market home computer with the Sinclair Spectrum. As teenagers, many of today's developers programmed games on the Spectrum in their bedrooms. Anyway, the BBC producer had also been trying to set up a meeting between Peter and Sir Clive. Could Peter make 9am on Wednesday at King's Cross in London? Peter was horrified. He is definitely not an early bird, and during the morning rush hour period King's Cross is at least two hours from his home.

But he agreed. And as he put down the phone he told us: "Do you know, I once shared a hotel room with Sir Clive Sinclair's wife." He lit a cigarette and wandered out onto the balcony. "Well, it was his girlfriend, actually – they never got married. But I can tell you everything about Sir Clive. Oh yes."

BALLS IN THE AIR

Demis had been deep in thought. Eventually he swore and rocked back in his chair. "What do you call, like, goodness or badness? If I have people being good or bad, like, on a scale of one to ten, what do you call it? I've called it goodness, but it's not right. There's a better word."

"What about 'balance'?" suggested Tim.

"Well... no, that's not quite right either."

Trainee programmer Paul Nettleton piped in eagerly: "Nature?"

"Alignment?" I offered.

Our hippy artist Mark Healey offered 'karma'.

Demis drew himself into his chair. "Well, yeah. But that's not quite right either. And Peter [who is not for his dreadful spelling] would never be able to spell 'karma'; it's got a 'K' in it. I guess 'alignment' is right, sort of. But we can't use that. It's like, some people in the game are good, some are real bastards. So what do you call it?"

Mark Webley had the solution. "Well, how about 'bastardism' then?"

Demis chuckled out loud. "Yes! I can just see that. So for each character in the game the AI routines will have to calculate the 'coefficient of bastardity'..."

Thankfully, Mark Webley stepped in to change the subject. "Hey I've just got an e-mail from Six Degrees. Anyone know what Six Degrees is all about?"

"It's a website," explained Jonty. "A huge database of some sort or another..."

"The theory is," Tim took over, with an air of authority, "that anyone can trace a link – through people they know – to everyone else in the world. If you plot out everyone, and everyone they know, then everyone they know, you're supposed to be able to make a link from anyone to anyone else in the world through a maximum of six people."

"What? So I know the Queen?" there was disbelief in Paul's question. I wasn't convinced either: "And I can trace a link to some street beggar in India?" Paul continued.

"Well, that's the theory," said Tim.

"That's got to be bollocks!" Demis scoffed. "It's just a mathematical thing, surely. Like you say, there are, I don't know, six billion people in the world. And everyone knows, say, 100 people. So if one link gives 100 people, two links gives 100 squared; six links gives six billion. Something like that."

"No, Demis," said Tim, sarcastically. "It's absolutely true. But if you don't believe it there's only one way to find out. Register." (The Six Degrees website is www.sixdegrees.com)

Artist Mark Healey, whose off-the-cuff thoughts are often surprisingly crude, had been listening quietly to all of this. "Hey! I know what I'll do," he chirped. "I'll set up a website where everyone can list all the people they've... you know, done it with. Then if you've got a new girlfriend, you can look her up and see who she was with before you. And maybe you could give ratings..."

Thankfully, at this point the tape ran out... [VCR]

★ Co-founder of *Games Workshop*, author of *Fighting Fantasy* Gamebooks, game designer, and columnist for *The Daily Telegraph*, Steve Jackson is now a director of start-up games developer, Lionhead.



Mark Webley and Steve Jackson consider plans for Lionhead's new office...



...ready for the move out of Lionhead's cramped office in Molyneux Mansion.



Kung fu fighting: Mark Healey and Demis Hassabis unwind.



Hot competition: Jonty Barnes and Peter play *Diddy Kong Racing*.



Peter impresses the team with a brilliant rendition of Chopin Nocturne...



...until we learn the truth – his piano runs on floppy disks.

WATCHDOG



Get your voice heard. Every month we'll be talking to industry types about your individual consumer complaints, and gleaning solutions direct from those in the know

★ WORDS Adam Phillips

NO JOY?

We're here to help. If you've got a consumer issue that needs addressing, drop us a line.

WRITE TO Watchdog, PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

E-MAIL Alternatively, e-mail us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading 'Watchdog'.



① *Grand Theft Auto*: not easy to find if you live in the United Arab Emirates.

I WANT TO NICK MOTORS

Could you please help me find a copy of *Grand Theft Auto* from a reputable retailer in the UK or US? As I live in the United Arab Emirates, it takes a fair amount of time for games to arrive here, and I've been informed that *GTA* won't get here for another three months!

Rob Heastens

★ We recommend you try Special Reserve, the UK's leading games club. Joining costs £12 a year and entitles you to all the latest releases at discounted prices. Alternatively, for 50p you can get a trial membership and order *GTA* as your one-off 'trial' game.

Special Reserve are selling *GTA* for £31.49 plus £2 postage and packaging (although if you order online from their website the

P&P is free). However, if you prefer to try the trial offer it'll cost £33.99 including P&P (approx 203 Dirhams). Payment can be made via credit card.

The only downside is that you'll have to allow 21 days for delivery, and if a game's out of stock you'll obviously have to wait even longer. You can contact Special Reserve on 01279 600204 or visit them online at www.reserve.co.uk/.

Finally, try not to get done for possessing banned goods should *GTA* happen to be outlawed in UAE...

PREMATURE RELEASE

I bought *Jane's F-15* on the day of its release (April 3) but found the registration card and the expert key reference missing. I wrote to Electronic Arts immediately, who sent

me an e-mail requesting my address, but have heard nothing since – and that was nearly a month ago.

Jon Ballinger

★ Electronic Arts have confirmed that the first batch released on April 3 was pulled from the shelves when the omissions were discovered. According to the EA bods, there shouldn't have been any time for these particular copies to be sold. Unfortunately, it sounds like your game slipped through the net. EA have promised to rectify the situation immediately.

BUG HUNT



BattleZone is a great game, but it's let down by several crucial bugs. One major problem is that quite frequently it's impossible to progress past

“Maxis are asking everyone to submit ideas for inclusion in *SimCity 3000*, but have they actually got time to implement any of them?”

the first mission due to the game crashing in the menu screens. It also has a tendency to crash during network play.

I can only hope that a patch is released soon to rectify what is otherwise a corker of a game.

Nicholas Witcomb

★ We gave the folks at Activision a call and they told us that there's already a suitable patch available to resolve the networking probs – you can find it on this month's *PC Zone* CD.

As for your complaints about the crashing menu screens... well, it's a bit of a mystery – they've had no similar complaints and nor have we. Activision told us that if the problem doesn't go away after the patch installation, you should call customer support on 01895 456700 to arrange a replacement copy. **PCZ**

SIMCUSTOMERCARE '98

Are Maxis looking after their customers properly, or could their customer care be in need of a fix-it patch?

Could you ask Maxis why *SimCity 3000* is so late and why their customer care is so poor? I'm referring to the lack of updates about the game on their website (www.maxis.com). I'd also like to know what the release date is.

Why don't they communicate with their customers through their bulletin board? As you know, they're asking everyone to submit ideas for inclusion in *SimCity 3000*, but have they actually got time to implement any of them? (And a show of gratitude would be nice for all our suggestions!) And why can't they release a demo or more up to date screenshots of the game?

Alan Moore

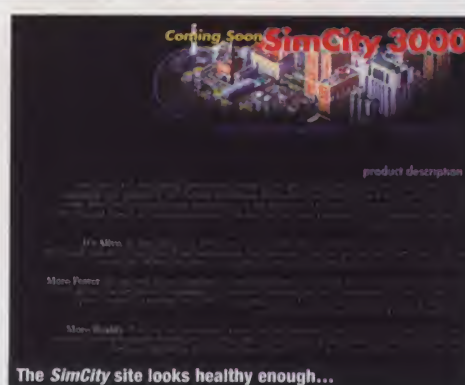
★ Maxis were recently taken over by Electronic Arts, causing something of a hiatus in info about *SimCity 3000*. However, the game will be surfacing in September. As for the lack of updates, according to Maxis' US office, you should see the site growing extensively now that the E3 show has been and gone.

Regarding the lack of feedback from Maxis about player-submitted ideas, they told us that you're “probably right” and that they would “look into it”.

Finally, they pointed out that all player feedback and suggestions are invaluable, because even if they don't make it into *SimCity 3000* there's always the sequel.



① The latest new screens of *SimCity 3000* – but will we ever see it? It's amazing what you can do with polygons these days!



The *SimCity* site looks healthy enough...



...until you look at the bulletin board section and see all the complaints.

NEW ISSUE



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COOL SUITS, HOT NIGHTS
Summer fashion, page 145

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THE BITTER END



All the daft stuff we couldn't cram in anywhere else

★ JOKER Charlie Brooker

FANTASY VS REALITY

It has come to our attention that a growing number of our readers are having difficulty telling the difference between fantasy and reality. Hence this new ready reckoner which explains precisely where you stand

HEADY THRILL OF FANTASY	NEAREST EQUIVALENT IN REALITY
Running around firing a range of fearsome weapons with the consummate skill of a battle-scarred marine.	Pinging a rubber band at 'Shagger' Jenkins from accounts with the cack-handed inefficiency of a pot-bellied arse in a cheap shirt.
Leaping from one precarious ledge to another against a zany milieu of garish cartoon-like backdrops while accompanied by a stimulating soundtrack.	Playing hopscotch during the Glastonbury Festival.
Piloting your Starfighter into the heart of an immense, spiralling wormhole in the nether quarters of uncharted space.	Driving to Carlisle in a Volvo 760.
A rush of euphoria as you finally vanquish a gigantic end-of-level boss.	A sense of relief as you finally get shot of a gigantic, pineapple-textured turd.
Rescuing a beautiful princess.	Downloading a pic of Jennifer Aniston with her top off.
Using your football management prowess to lead your favourite team into the FA Cup Final.	Organising a weekly five-a-side in the local park with other chubby twenty-somethings who are almost as desperate to lose weight as you are.

Golden Shovel Awards

There are lies, damned lies... and press releases. The worst receive our glorious Golden Shovel award, bestowed upon anyone who doesn't just shovel bullshit, but has to use *both* hands to do it

★ **Blather Award** "To play *Reah* it is vital to find a way back to reality... The trance, ambient, trip-hop and drum 'n' bass soundtrack completes the experience and shows that *Reah* is something special"
Black Friar press release

★ **Not Quite True Award** "Reach out and touch your cockpit controls with a mouse, just like a pilot would"
Interactive Magic, on iF/A 18e Carrier Strike Fighter

★ **Yeah, Right Award** "*Soldier Of Fortune* allows us to... bring first-person shooters to broader PC audiences"
Robert Kotick, CEO, Activision, on their forthcoming 'controversial' vaguely fascistic violence-'em-up.

TOT BUTCHER!

Underage drivers encouraged to spin cars like imbeciles as menacing underground commander laughs in the face of justice

★ FROM OUR INTOLERANCE CORRESPONDENT Reginald Piss

A sick virtual reality game which encourages children to commit suicidal acts with motor cars has been condemned as "breath-takingly irresponsible" by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Senseless Carnage. *Micro Machines V3* graphically depicts a cast of smiling, fresh-faced children driving motorised vehicles around a series of everyday household locations in a reckless manner.

"The kids shown in the game are clearly too young to hold valid driving licences," stormed Sir Garfield Church, spokesman for the RSPSC. "Impressionable children might try to mimic their actions by stealing the family car and driving in circles on the kitchen table. Not only would this destroy the furniture, there's a very real chance of a high-speed accident occurring, during which the victim's soft flesh would be torn to ribbons like a bucket of chuck steak tossed into a high-speed turbine propeller."

There is also concern about the game's use of so-called power-ups, which include an oversized cartoon mallet used

to squash the opposition. Experts fear it may lead to an increase in underage hammer attacks by toddlers sent into a murderous trance by the game's sinister psychedelic visuals. "It wouldn't take long for a child to beat the population of a small market town to death - especially if their victims were asleep or tied to chairs," said Church.

CERTAIN DEATH AWAITS

Linus Jenkins, President of the Virtual Entertainment Committee which safeguards the interests of games manufacturers, dismissed the outrage as "pointless scare-mongering". When asked to comment on a *Daily Intolerance* report that another game, *Sim City 2000*, requires players to squeeze a live mouse in their right hand during play, Jenkins snorted and made an obscene gesture. "The last thing we need is another ill-informed media



① "PIED PIPER OF DEATH: depraved 'entertainment' may lead innocent tots to violent bloody death."

② "ALL SMILES: but behind cunning facade lurks sick heart of degenerate killer."

witch-hunt, so don't blow this up out of all proportion," said the 36-year-old deathmonger.

"And for Christ's sake, don't churn out that nonsensical rubbish implying I'm some kind of satanic overlord again," quoth the dark one, his piercing, close-set eyes afire with ungodly rage.

Last night, as stores continued to stock the lethal game, Sir Garfield Church feared the worst. "We're facing a bloodbath of nigh-on biblical proportions," he warned, before retiring to a nearby shop doorway to stand around scratching himself and shouting nonsense at passers-by. Games are sick and wrong.

UNNOVATIONSPICK OF THE MONTH

When these products pop up in an overpriced lifestyle accessories catalogue tucked inside your favourite Sunday newspaper, just remember: you saw them here *first*

A dream come true FOR GUTBUCKETS EVERYWHERE

Many computer users have a serious weight problem. The sedentary nature of their hobby means that the words 'computer boffin' are almost synonymous with 'big, fat pig'. Well, imagine being able to lose weight while eating

countless platefuls of crispy, deep-fried food! The Lipofryer™ is the last word in modern kitchen appliances - a potent liposuction device coupled with a state-of-the-art deep-fat fryer. Simply attach the comfortable hose to a

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SICK NOTES



It's the arse end of the mag, and here we are again, wiping clean our fundament on the very *worst* letters we received this month (turn to page 11 for the best)

☛ SNEERING Charlie Booker

SEND US YOUR SICK NOTES (AND WIN A GAME!)

THE PLACE TO WRITE FOR VITROLIC ABUSE

Sick Notes wants to tear strips off you. Reckon you can handle it? Or are you a big chicken? Bwok bwok bwok bwok bwok... That's you. Go lay an egg or something. Braver souls can write to letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk, remembering to put the phrase 'Sick Notes' in the subject header. Those of you too stupid to have an Internet account (presumably on the grounds that you already have a huge pornography collection) can send lo-fi paper-and-ink mail to: Sick Notes, PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover St, London W1P 7HJ.

The worst letter of the month wins a crap game from a recent issue.

JUST DO IT, SICKO...

Last month we asked you to send in some pictures. So do it, damn you! Drawings, photos, whatever. Just give 'em here. Also, we're especially interested in hearing from anyone who reckons we've been unfairly hard on a given game. Come on, write to us. Do it. Tonight.

“What's wrong with nice graphics? Bet you like 'real ale' too. If you know so much about gameplay, perhaps you'd like to come up with a precise formula explaining how it works”

— 'CARMGOD', E-MAIL

GIVE HER BOTH BARRELS

I just love your magazine. It's the best, and as long as we don't run out of trees it always will be. But this letter wouldn't be complete without a little criticism. And being a bitchy swot, making criticisms comes naturally to me.

The thing is, your Word Processor page is becoming more and more like a problem page. Who wants to know about Mr Salad's obsolete graphics card, or Suicide Lil who just can't say goodbye to the Spectrum? I certainly don't. Why does such a clever and witty magazine have to be let down by dribbling, boring letters? Why can't you print interesting ones? And as for the 'smug, witty and intelligent replies' — there's just not enough of them, so why not print this one and criticise it all you like? Go ahead, it's on me.

Hayley, Walsall

☛ Your letter is rubbish.

YOU'RE SHIT AND YOU KNOW YOU ARE

Brooker, I'd just like to say that your reviews are shit. You start off describing something that has nothing to do with the game and keep going on about it for ages, filling up almost half of the review and saying nothing about the game. Now that's just plain shit writing.

'Carmgod', e-mail

☛ Sorry, Carmgod. In an attempt to appease you, all subsequent reviews in *PC Zone* are to consist of nothing more than a bulleted list of facts and figures assembled by a computer. And if you're

looking for a fight, step outside. I hear you punch like a girl.

BACK IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS...

Am I the only person who thinks the advent of 3D accelerator cards is the worst thing to happen to the PC gaming industry since the release of *Rise Of The Robots*? Every month it seems we're seeing more and more games that are little more than a triumph of style over content. Who cares if a game looks like a sequence from *Independence Day* if it plays like an utter dog? Today's programmers might be able to make pretty graphics, but they wouldn't know decent gameplay if it came up and bit them on the nose.

Howard

☛ What's wrong with nice graphics? Bet you like 'real ale' too. Idiot. And do you think programmers have it easy or something? If you know so much about gameplay, perhaps you'd like to come up with a precise formula explaining how it works. You could circulate it among all the software houses, and within six months we'd never have to endure a lacklustre game ever again.

Or maybe, juuuuust maybe, you'll be forced to admit that the difference between good and bad gameplay isn't something you can quantify. For the programmers, it involves skill, luck and an ability to improvise with the game design. It's very easy to sit on your fat arse and snipe at others though, isn't it? You horrid little do-nothing. Shut up and keep rotting.

“Who wants to know about Mr Salad's obsolete graphics card, or Suicide Lil who just can't say goodbye to the Spectrum? I certainly don't”

— HAYLEY, WALSALL

LOSER OF THE MONTH

HE'S A LITTLE BIT NUTTY

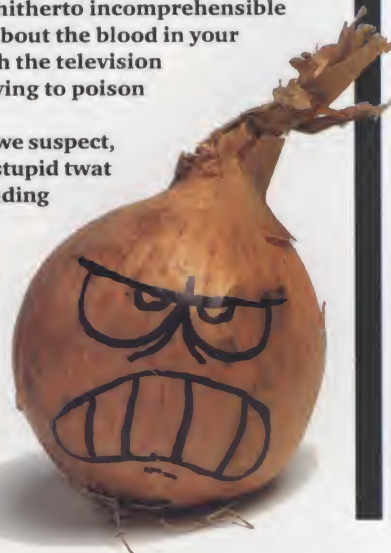
Hello, crazy *Zone* dudes. I'm writing to you with an idea for a game. It's called *Onion Fighter* and it stars you (the player) as the King of the Onions. To succeed you must destroy a variety of vegetable-headed opponents with your incredible special moves. If anyone cuts your skin, their eyes water. The game could be followed up with a sequel called *Onion Fighter II* in which you get to beat up Gyles Brandreth and Ainsley Harriot, except they look like onions.

I tried selling my ideas to a games company but they said I was mad! I can't imagine why. Bibble bibble bibble ONIONS!

Alan 'Onion Master' Harris, e-mail

☛ Ha ha ha! Thanks for that, Alan! You're hilarious! We laughed ourselves sick at your letter! *Onion Fighter*, eh? Crazy guy! Ha ha ha! Bet your friends think you're absolutely bonkers! Tee hee! No wonder that company said you were mad, because you are! Ho ho! You're a total loony! Yuk yuk! So, do you do all the other stuff mad people do, like sitting around glancing feverishly at the walls, clawing at their own eyes in a desperate attempt to rid their sight of the invisible faces that haunt every waking moment? Or crying alone in a darkened room, at the mercy of a relentless stream of terrifying disjointed thoughts which enrapture and enslave, yet can never be adequately explained to anyone else? And do you, like them, shamble around in a pit of your own filth, talking, talking, endlessly talking to the pipes in the wall and the radio waves in the atmosphere, sensing the vibrations of passing molecules and thereby learning hitherto incomprehensible universal truths about the blood in your veins, blood which the television companies are trying to poison from afar?

Or perhaps, as we suspect, you're just a sad, stupid twat who thinks pretending to be 'insane' is funny. Hang around a medium secure unit for the mentally disturbed for a couple of weeks. See if you're still laughing then, jerk-off.



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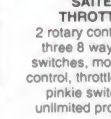
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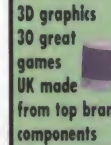
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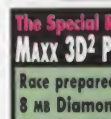
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Overseas orders must be paid by credit card. Overseas surcharge £2.00 per item. Hardware items (mains or battery) are only supplied to the UK mainland.

Immediate cheque clearance

Cheques payable to Special Reserve at PO Box 847, Harlow, CM21 9PH

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WIN 15 PlayStations with F1 and a £2000 PC

10% Deposit, no more to pay for 9 months and no interest, subject to status. You can buy anything from our catalogue or shops this way providing your total purchase is over £200. 0% APR if the balance is paid in full or 29.9% APR extended loan. Other special discounts do not apply. Full details available.

SPECIAL RESERVE BIG CLUB SHOPS

SAWBRIDGEWORTH

The Mailings, Station Road, Sawbridgeworth, Herts.
Not far from the M11, just around the corner from the train station
Tel: 01279 600399

MASSIVE SELECTION - LOWEST PRICES

We'll beat any locally advertised price by £2.

All our shops have PC Upgrade and Repair facilities and we sell a range of award-winning PC's from £899.



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Opposite Somerfield Supermarket
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EGHAM

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CHELMSFORD

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Just around the corner from the bus station
Tel: 01245 348777

NOTTINGHAM

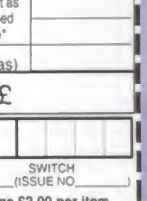
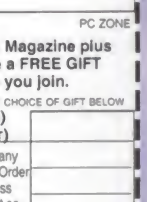
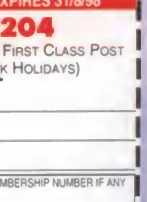
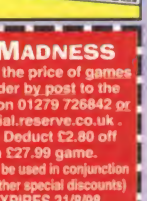
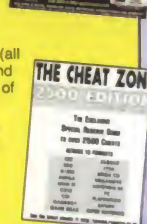
164 Derby Road, Stapleford, Nottingham.
2 miles from junction 25 of the M1,
near Kwik Fit and Pizza Hut
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GREAT WEB SITE AT

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MASSIVE CONTENT

Inevitably some products listed may not yet be available and prices may change. Please phone 01279 600204. Some items carry a £1 surcharge in our shops. SAYE = Saving off full recommended price. Sent to press 18/05/98 Errors & Omissions Excluded. Inter-Mediate Ltd. T/A Special Reserve. The Mailings, Sawbridgeworth, Herts CM21 9PH



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